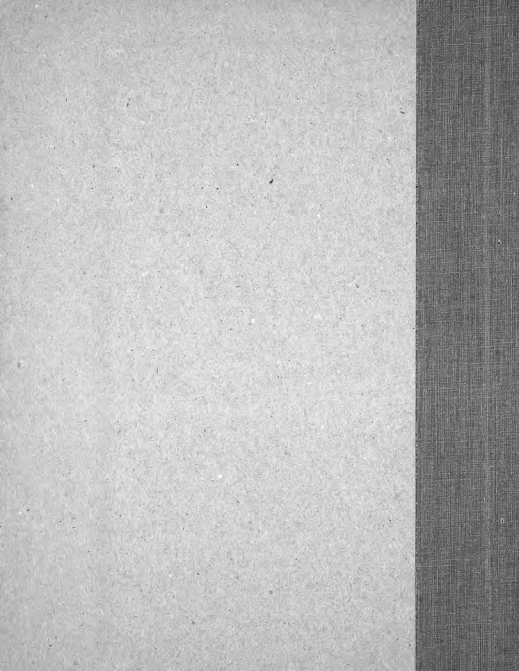


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The HUDSON'S BAY ROUTE

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THE HUDSON'S BAY ROUTE

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PART I.

The Old Route

FOREWORD

STAGE I.....SEA

STAGE II.....LAND

STAGE III.....PORT AND HINTERLAND

PART II.

The New Route

PART III.

Appendices

FOREWORD

This is a story of adventure — one of those great continuing adventures in the course of which many generations of men pit their skill, their courage and their endurance against the implacable forces of Nature. This adventure went on for centuries; it may have changed in form but its end remained the same. That end was the opening of a route.

From the dawn of history the progress of nations has depended to a large extent upon their ability to exchange goods and commodities with other lands. Trade flowed up and down the great rivers of the ancient world, along the far-flung caravan routes of mediæval times, and, as sailors grew ever bolder, across the seas and oceans. The opening of a new route, by sea or by land, has always been looked upon as one of the major triumphs of peace.

Many of the great trade routes of the Old World followed the lines of least resistance, through broad fertile valleys watered by placid streams under friendly skies. The route which is the theme of our story traverses Polar seas and barren lands under the bleakest and most relentless of skies. The record of the opening of such a route is one of the great epics of the human story, worthy of an honoured place in the continuing record of that grand adventure of the human spirit which we call civilization.

Part I — The Old Route . . .

STAGE I — SEA

To a great lone land,

Our story will take us first to a great inland sea, land-locked save for its northern approaches through the Arctic waters. All around that sea lie vast stretches of barren lands bearing in every physical feature the unmistakable imprint of the passing of the great ice sheets. You will find evidence of that passing in the bedrock surface, hummocky with rounded hills and ridges of rock alternating with basin-like depressions; in the accumulation of glacial drift in those depressions, in the glacial lake-beds, and in the comparatively even elevation of the whole region. The whole land has been scoured by the movement of great ice masses, thousands of feet thick. The oldest rocks of the earth's crust have been laid bare, and lie there today, hard, unyielding, barren.

A Canadian poet, E. J. Pratt, has described this region in the picture language which a poet loves. He pictures the great Laurentian Shield, which surrounds our inland sea, as a huge boa with its tail in Labrador, its body coiled around the Hudson Bay up north through Manitoba and Saskatchewan to Great Slave Lake, its neck past Great Bear Lake, and its head hidden in the Arctic Seas.

This folded reptile was asleep or dead
So motionless, she seemed stone dead - just seemed.
She was too old for death, too old for life,
For as if jealous of all living forms
She had lain there before bivalves began
To catacomb their shells on western mountains.
Somewhere within this life-death zone she sprawled,
Torpid upon a rock-and-mineral mattress,
Ice-ages had passed by and over her,
But these, for all their motion, had but sheared
Her spotty carboniferous hair or made
Her ridges stand out like the spikes of molocks.
Her back grown stronger every million years,
She had shed water by the longer rivers
To Hudson Bay and by the shorter streams
To the great basins to the south, had filled
Them up, would keep them filled until the end
Of Time.

But beyond this massive pre-cambrian barrier lay our prairies, as yet untouched by the plough. The same massive ice-sheets which had denuded the ancient rocks of the shield had here played a more beneficent part in the building of this land. Let a soil

scientist, J. H. Ellis, explain how what is called the "soil parent material" was spread over the prairies.

The significant point is that during the last glacial period the enormous Keewatin ice sheet had its centre in the vicinity of Hudson Bay from which point the ice moved slowly in all directions, modifying the surface over which it moved. The surface projections were either plucked away or smoothed and the rocks were scoured and striated. Stones, fragments of rock, and rock flour which became embedded in the ice were moved as and when the ice moved and later were deposited as and when the ice melted. This mixed material, i.e. stones, sand and clay, transported and deposited by glacial ice, is called boulder till or glacial drift. (It can be recognized by the presence of stones embedded in assorted textured materials.) The boulder till thus derived was deposited as a covering of varying thickness over the rocks of the first and second steppes.

Even as the ice retreated it left its imprint on our prairie landscape. The great retreat was a halting one, and the temporary halts are clearly marked by morainic hills holding undrained sloughs. Much more important to us were the great lakes that were formed when the natural drainage to the north was impeded by the yet unmelted ice barrier — glacial Lake Souris, and the vast glacial Lake Agassiz whose level beds are now rich farm lands.

Within the Shield itself there was wealth of another form as yet untouched. The igneous rocks exposed by the passing of the ice are rich in minerals — deep veins of copper-zinc, gold-quartz, copper-gold, and tin, with lodes of ores of silver, lead, cadmium, nickel and uranium.

Later on both farm and mine will enter our story; but at the time it begins, about four centuries ago, neither plough nor drill had touched this great lone land.

* * *

there came men of
the morning mists.

The first men who came to this land probably crossed from Asia by a land bridge which once united Alaska and Siberia. An American anthropologist insists that everything points to an Asiatic ancestry for all the races which first inhabited this hemisphere.

Even the oldest human bones found in America have been pronounced Mongoloid. So one question is answered:

the first man to discover America came from Siberia. This may not be the final answer, but since nothing to contradict it has been discovered since 1492 we must accept it as the best answer.

To learn how they came and the paths they took to reach the uttermost bounds of both the Americas, the anthropologist calls in the aid of the archeologist. Evidence is sought in the remains of ancient weapons such as the chipped spear points that were first found at Folsom in New Mexico, easily distinguishable by their unique pattern. These, found with the fossil bones of a now extinct type of bison, establish clearly the identity and the antiquity of the aboriginal hunters. The anthropologist goes on—

There are now five justly famous places where early man has left his card in Alaska near Fairbanks, at Fort Collins, Colorado, Folsom, New Mexico, Clovis, New Mexico, Fell's Cave, southern Chile. There are many other places where more or less doubtful traces of early man have been noted, but we pass over them with the remark that they are important only because they help to prove the case. Anyway these five sites serve as scattered markers for a trail beginning in Asia and ending in Cape Horn.

Of the men who first roamed over the land which is now Canada, the anthropologist recognizes two distinct groups, Eskimos and Indians, but he is a little hesitant about the tribal distinctions amongst the latter. Usually tribes are held together by family bonds of language, customs and mutual interests. But here the roving bands were often completely independent of those to whom they might be bound by kinship. Then again these small bands wandered far and lost connection with their kinsmen. The Micmacs of Nova Scotia spoke dialects of the same tongue as the Blackfeet of the prairies although they lived over two thousand miles apart and were totally ignorant of each others existence.

In the area in which our story is laid we may find men of what are loosely grouped as the Plains Tribes, with three divisions of the Blackfoot (Blackfoot proper, Piegan and Blood), the Sarcee, the Assiniboines or Stonies, and a branch of the Cree. Further north we find Chipewyans of the widespread Athapaskan Family, and along the shores of the Arctic and the Hudson's Bay are scattered bands of that race which was probably the last to leave their ancestral homes in Siberia, and the first to be seen by European sailors, the distinctively Mongoloid Esquimaux, our Eskimos.

Let us see how these appeared to one of those early venturers into the Hudson's Bay, Captain W. Coats who made

many voyages in those waters over two hundred years ago thus describes them—

The Usquemows, all over the streights, are bold, robust, hardy people, undaunted, masculine men, no tokens of poverty or want, with great fat, flatt, greasy faces, little black piercing eyes, good teeth, lank, black, matted hair, with little hands and feet, under proportion, a well made back and shoulders; leggs, buttock, and haunces, well fortified, thighs are pretty full, but their leggs taper into a little foot. . .

Their women weare such an uncouth habit, as make it extreemly difficult for them to move about at all, their shoes, boots, and breaches are all of a peice, sett of to an extravagant breadth at top, which holds a chud and half their household furniture in each. . . .

In this garb, this happy people enjoy a contentment not to be purchased by rubies. . . .

They have many contrivances to catch fowl and kill fish of the most enormous size, very ingenious and curious, and with great facility These canoes are so tender, and composed of so many little peaces of wood, of whalebones and bones of fish and beasts, as would astonish you how they held together; and lastly they draw over this peice batt frame, a covering of skins, made tite all over, and sow'd on close everywhere to that hoop where its lord sits in pride and haughty contempt.

Captain Coats gives an interesting glimpse of the Indians whom he encountered in the region in which our story is set.

These northern Indians are an exact compound between the Usquemows and the western Indians, are robust and wild; not so debcate as the western Indians, negligent of their persons to the last degree; very fond of iron and iron tools of all sorts, and so indifferent about rain and sunshine or tempestuous weather, as if they had lost all degrees of sense. For my own part, I saw a gang of them once at Churchill River, whom I thought so savage and brutal that I little expected anything rational from them And yet the leader of those Indians asked us many pertinent questions; very inquisitive into our manner of life, from whence we brought those goods? where we got our iron? went all over the ship, examined our anchors, cables, in short everything he saw, the compass he took for a toy and all we could do or say about it made him laugh.

A "fourth part of
the Earth" is added
to the three known
to the Ancients.

Any map of the world drawn as late as the fifteenth century A.D. would show one vast land mass, surrounded by one vast sea. But if Earth was round, as was asserted by some, then it would be possible for a navigator, bold enough to venture into the unknown, to set his course steadily to the west, and to come at length to the Far East. So reasoned, amongst others, the great Genoese adventurer, Christopher Columbus, who, under the flag of Spain, sailed westward and came to islands lying, as he thought, off the eastern shores of Asia.

But the savants of Europe were not fully satisfied, particularly when further sailings disclosed the presence of a land mass which did not quite fit into the simple pattern of the world known to the ancients. Here is one of them, a Spaniard, Antonio de Herrera, who voices a clearer vision of a richer world pattern—

Two elements make the globe, whose upper face in part is Earth, and in part is Sea. The ancients divided the Earth in three parts, and gave to everyone his name. The first they called Europe, more celebrated than any other. The second, Asia, which is greater than the rest and containeth the great Kingdome of China. The third, Africa. Christopher Colon, first Admirall of the Indies gave a beginning to the Discovery of that which at this day is counted the fourth part of the World, which goeth so high to the North that it hides itselfe under the Pole Articke without knowing any end.

* * *

and a long quest is
begun.

Our present story begins with another Italian adventurer, John Cabot, who sailed under the flag of England and discovered Newfoundland. Let us read a letter written in the London of Henry Tudor by an Italian, Raimondo, to his master the Duke of Milan—

The King has gained a great part of Asia without a stroke of the sword. In this kingdom is a popular Venetian called Zecanne Caboto, a man of considerable ability, most skilled in navigation, who having seen the most serene kings, first him of Portugal, then him of Spain, that they had occupied unknown islands, thought to make a similar acquisition for His Majesty (Henry VII). And having the royal privileges which gave him the use of the land found by him, provided the right of possession was reserved to the Crown,

he departed in a little ship from Bristol with 18 persons, who placed their fortunes with him. Passing Ibernica (Ireland) more to the west and then ascending towards the north, he began to navigate the eastern part of the ocean, leaving for some days the north to the right hand, and having wandered enough he came at last to firm land, where he planted the royal banners, took possession for his Highness, made certain marks, and returned

The said Messer Zcanna, as he is a foreigner and poor, would not be believed if his partners, who are all Englishmen, and from Bristol, did not testify to the truth of what he tells.

And in the accounts of the Privy Purse of the seventh Henry of England is the item:

"To him that found the new isle, ten pounds"

It is thought that the idea of discovering a passage to the east round the northern shores of this new-found land first occurred to John Cabot. There is little doubt that his son Sebastian was amongst the first to grasp the significance of what had been discovered. His charts, drawn after his second voyage to the north-west seas show an unbroken coastline from Florida to Labrador.

Peter Martyr of Angleria writes:

The North seas have been searched by one Sebastian Cabot, a Venetian borne, furnished two ships at his owne charge and first with 300 men directed his course towards the N. Pole, that even in the Moneth of July he found monstrous heapes of Ice swimming in the Sea, and in a manner continually daylight. Thus seeing these heapes of Ice before him he was enforced to trim his sayles.

It is certain that Sebastian Cabot, who became the first Governor of an English trading company entitled "The Merchant Adventurers" knew the coast of Labrador, and that probably he saw, if he did not enter, the channels afterwards known as the Davis Strait and the Hudson Strait, which the later explorers, Sir Martin Frobisher and Captain John Davis were certain would lead by a North-West Passage to the great South Sea that washed the shores of Cathay.

Here is a letter written in 1587 by Captain John Davis to a friend, Mr. Saunderson:

Good Mr. Saunderson, with God's great mercy, I have made my safe returne in health with all my company and

have sailed 60 leagues further than my determination at my departure. I have been in 73 deg finding the sea all open and 40 leagues between Land and Land. The Passage most probable; the Execution easie as at my coming you shall fully knowe.

* * *

In which Henry
Hudson enters
Hudson's Bay.

Of all the master-mariners who sailed the frigid seas on the quest for a passage by water to the Far East, Henry Hudson is the best remembered. His name is written large on the maps of this newly found continent: first on the river up which he sailed in the vain hope that here might be the long-sought waterway; and then on the great Bay in which he met his fate.

It is a tragic story, one of the most sorry episodes in the history of exploration, this marooning of the captain of the "Discovery" with his young son and seven other members of his crew by a mutinous group of starving sailors. The course of the disaster is fully narrated by one of the survivors, a landsman attached to the crew, Abacuk Prickett. Master Prickett, in his record, is careful to absolve himself from participation in the mutiny. He was acquitted of the charge by the Admiralty Court of Oyer and Terminer (a Norman-French phrase meaning "to hear and to determine") but the bluff and hearty Yorkshireman, Captain Luke Foxe, hearing the story, commented "Well, Prickett, I am in great doubt of thy fidelity to Master Hudson." We shall hear more of Luke Foxe, but first let us look at Prickett's story of the entering of the Bay.

John Davis had noted what he called the "Furious Overfall", a rapid rippling current at the entrance of what is now known as Hudson Strait, which Frobisher had also described as having "a fayre continent upon the starreboard syde and continuance of an open sea". These and observations of other mariners did, as Foxe remarks "light Hudson into his straights". But no adventurer from the Old World had ever before looked upon the two noble headlands which Hudson named Cape Digges and Cape Wolstenholme bounding a narrow navigable channel which was, he was convinced, the long-sought North-West Passage.

This is Prickett's account of the fateful passing of these narrows—

He then left those lands to the North-East and fell into a rip line or overfall of a current, which he thought to be

aboard water, but had no ground. He put on still in sight of the South land and raised land 2 leag. from the maine, but it proved to be an island, having a very fair headland to the West which he named Cape Diggea, on the other side to the East was another Cape or Headland which he called Cape Worstenholme betwixt which two he sailed South.

He wayed and stood S.E. for so the land laid and came to have land on both sides. The land on the W was a very narrow point, and to the S. there was a large Sea. He stood to the South between these two lands not above two leagues and in sight of the East shore, in the end he lost sight thereof.

Hudson came at length to what was afterwards known as the Bottom of the Bay. He was forced to winter there on the desolate shore. Scurvy broke out, food failed. The suffering of that wintering, the mutiny itself, the massacre of the greater part of the mutineers by Eskimos on Digges Island, and the subsequent horrors of the voyage home by the survivors, are all described in Prickett's diary

There is an interesting document in the records of the Admiralty Court. It reads (in part)

Prattee arraigned at Southwarck on Friday the XXIII of July 1618

Abacuk Prickett
Edward Wilson
Francis Clemens
Bennett Mathues

(1) For feloniously pironing and putting Henry Hudson, master of the "Discovery", out of the same ship with eight more of his company into a shallop in the Isle in the parts of America without meat, drink, clothes or other provision, whereby they died

(2) For fleeing from justice.

Plead: Not Guilty

Verdict: Not Guilty nor did they flee

• • •

In which hopes are
dashed—but not all
lost.

The return of the "Discovery", with the few survivors of the fateful voyage, aroused high excitement in London. Hudson's chart, which showed the eastern shores of the Bay only with nothing save an untermiated peninsula to the west, convinced the merchants that the way had been opened to the fabulously



Photograph from W. B. Meyers

THE LAST VOYAGE OF HENRY HUDSON

This dramatic painting by the English artist John Collier, in the Tate Gallery at London, represents Hudson abandoned in a small boat by his mutinous crew in Hudson Bay June 22, 1611, with his gallant son John, and one of the sick men put into the shallop with them.



B.C.A.F. photo

rich Far East. A royal charter was granted by James the First to the "Gouvernor and Company of the Merchaunts of London, Discoverers of the North-West Passage" and various ships were fitted out to confirm the great discovery.

One of these vessels, the "Resolution" commanded by Sir Thomas Button, enters our story directly. His instructions were:

remembering that your end is West, we would have you stand over to the opposite Maine, in the latitude of some 58 degrees, where, riding at some Headland, observe well the flood; yf it come in Southwest, then you may be sure the passage is that waie, yf from the North or Northwest, your course must be upp into it.

Button followed closely these instructions. Leaving the Hudson Straît he sailed westward and came at length to land again at a point he named "Hopes Checked". Turning south he was forced to winter at the mouth of a large river. Many of his crew died through exposure to the intense cold, amongst them his sailing-master Francis Nelson in memory of whom Button named the river which later played such an important part in our story.

In the early summer he sailed north as far as 65° until he came to the channel which he called "Ne Ultra" ("no further"). But hope was not entirely lost. He reported that he had found "about latitude of 60 degrees, a strong race of a tyde running sometimes Eastwarde, sometimes Westwarde, whereupon Josias Hubbarde in his platt (chart) called yt place Hubbarts Hope as in the map appeareth".

The Company of Merchants Discoverers of London did not lose hope. Three more expeditions were fitted out and sent to the Bay. On one of these sailed William Baffin an experienced navigator — you will find his name writ large on our northern approaches. To John Wolstenholme, one of the chief promoters of the Company he wrote:

"And to speak of no other matter than of the hopefull passage to the north-west how many of the best sort of men have set their whole indenvours to prove a passage that waye, and not only in conference, but also in writing, and publishing to the world; yea what great summes of money hath been spent about that action, as your worship hath costly experience thereof."

*In which Jens
Munck discovers the
Churchill River,*

Our first extract is taken from a diary written a hundred years after the tragedy that marked the first wintering of a ship's crew at what is now the port of Churchill. It was written by Captain

James Knight who in the year 1717 was establishing the first permanent settlement at the mouth of the river—

"One of our men discovered in the Mudd A Great Gun lying a Good way of on the flats — but cannot tell Yet whether it is brass or Iron — and Sevl barrs of Cast Iron wch I will seek after shortly The Gun is 12 poundr without Doubt it was a very great Ship as was lost here, by its haveing such Great Guns."

That gun was all that was left of the Danish frigate *Enhiörningen* ("Unicorn") carrying 48 men, and the sloop *Lamprenen* ("Lamprey") with 18 men, the first European vessels to enter the Churchill. Under Captain Jens Munck the expedition had left Copenhagen on the 30th of May, 1619. Delayed by ice in unknown waters Munck had struck straight across the Hudson's Bay and had discovered, apparently by accident, the harbourage afforded by the protected mouth of the river. Stormy weather and the increasing cold decided him to winter there

"I never See such A Miserable Place in all my Life," wrote Knight a hundred years later, "and there was but one Little Place where the Danes had Wintred, wch is upon a point as hardly contains So much compass of Ground as the Royall Exchange Stands upon. And when I Saw it I was not at all Surprised to think of so many of the Danes as Lost their Lives in comeing so late to this Place. And there is no other Place to build at this River but the outer point, where the lakemays tents is, wch is impossible for any European to Live at."

A modern writer, James F Kenney, tells the story in his "The Founding of Churchill"

"The two ships were brought up a Danish mile, or four and a half English miles, from the entrance of the harbour, and across the stony flats to the protection of a promontory on the western shore — the sloop well on shore, the frigate in a dock built of timber and stones. This indicates a location close to that of the old fort and present factory of the Hudson's Bay Company. Stores were also brought ashore and apparently placed in houses built to protect them, but the crews were left to pass the winter on shipboard.

The winter does not seem to have been unusually severe for Churchill but the Danes were quite unprepared for that climate, and their surgeons were incompetent to render medical assistance. After Christmas scurvy attacked the entire personnel, and out of the sixty-five men who sailed from Norway only Munck and two sailors were alive when the ice broke up the following June. The "Unicorn" was left where it lay in a dock on the flats, but the "Lamprey" was successfully launched.'

A Frenchman, Nicolas Jérémie, tells how the natives, when they arrived at the place the following summer, were astonished at seeing so many strange corpses and at first fled in terror. Returning they ignorantly applied fire to the gunpowder, thus destroying all that was left of the first settlement at Churchill.

* * *

and two English
sea-captains tell of
the continuing
search

One of the most scholarly of the master mariners of the early seventeenth century was a genial Yorkshireman, Captain Luke Foxe, whom we have previously noted as being a little sceptical of the good faith of Master Abacuk

Prickett. In his book which he entitled

NORTH WEST FOX

or FOX FROM THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

he recounts all that he knew of early legendary voyages to the Arctic seas 'beginning with King Arthur'

His own Preface begins:

Gentle Reader,

Expect not heere any flourishing Phrases or Eloquent Tearmes for this Child of mine, begot in the North-west's cold clime, (where they breed no Schollers) is not able to digest the sweet mulk of Rethorick that's food for them.

He goes on to explain how divers persons have enquired—

as what hath Foxe done, others how farre had hee beene, hath he beene as far as any man, if there be a passage how chance hee hath not found it, if not why doe they search after it.

After a somewhat lengthy but very entertaining preamble he writes—

But I feare me I have held thee too long in this place,
like him who proposeth to take a long Journey stumbles upon
his owne threshold, but have Patience, for I had rather be
in fault than want. I have prostrated my duty to my King,
my service to my Countrey, craving thy favourable accept-
ance, I rest

Thine in all welwilling,

Luke Foxe.

Foxe's place in our Hall of Fame is assured by the open
waterway up which he sailed, the Foxe Channel, the most
northerly waters then ventured upon in the great Quest.

About the same time (the two ships, Captain Luke Foxe's
"Charles" and Captain Thomas James' "Henrietta Maria", met off
Nelson in 1631) the southern waters of the great Bay were being
most diligently searched for a possible passage to the "South
Sea" James also described his voyage in a book His title was:

THE DANGEROUS VOYAGE OF CAPTAIN THOMAS JAMES IN HIS
INTENDED DISCOVERY OF A NORTH-WEST PASSAGE
TO THE SOUTH SEA
wherein

the Miseries endured, both Going, Wintering and Returning,
and the Rareties observ'd Philosophical, Mathematical and
Natural are related in this Journal of it publish'd by special
command of King Charles I

James' account begins as follows—

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty

My being made Choice of for this Employment and my
Undertaking of it encourag'd by Your gracious Command,
I must account the greatest Honour that ever befel me. Many
a Storm, and Rock, and Mist, and Wind, and Tide, and Sea,
and Mount of Ice, have I in this Discovery encountered with;
many a Despair and Death had almost overwhelmed me.

I have done my goodwill in it and tho' not brought home
the News of this supposed and long sought for Passage; yet
I shall here divulge those observations which may I hope
become some way beneficial to my Country.

He describes how he had formally taken possession for the King
of the lands he had found—

I had cut down a very high tree and made a Cross of it.
To it I now fastened uppermost the King and Queen's Pictures
drawn to the Life; and doubly wrapt in Lead, and so close
that no weather could hurt them. Betwixt both these I affixed

His Majesty's Royal Title viz. Charles the First, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland: As also of Newfoundland and of these Territories and to the Westward as far as Nova Albion and to the Northward to the Lat. of 80 Deg etc.

This being Midsummer Day we rais'd it to the Top of the bare Hill where we had buried our dead Fellows; formally by this ceremony taking Possession of these Territories to His Majesty's Use.

James' conclusion is significant — it indicates a growing doubt as to the existence of any Passage. He points out that the tide is constantly from the East, that there are no small fish in the great Bay, that the ice flees are those of land-bound waters, and that such movement of ice as did occur always took place eastward through the Hudson Strait.

Most certain it is, that by the Industry of our own Nation, those Northern Parts of America have been discover'd to the Latitude of 80 Degrees and upwards. And it hath been so curiously done, the Labours of several men being join'd together, that the main Land hath been both seen and search'd, and they have brought this supposed Passage to this Pass that it must be to the N of 66 Degrees of Latitude, a cold Climate, pester'd with Ice, and other Inconveniences and where the Spaniards Dispositions and there weak ships can hardly endure it.

Now it is most possible that there is no Passage.

* * *

STAGE II — LAND

*In which we pass
from Hudson's Bay
to Rupert's Land.*

For almost forty years after the return of Foxe and James, the men of London showed little interest in the exploration of the Bay or the search for the Passage. They had business at home which concerned them much more closely, for King and Parliament were at odds. It was not until some years after the restoration of the monarchy that their interest in the distant regions of the Far North of the Americas was revived by the strange tales told by two disgruntled French fur-traders from Canada, Pierre Esprit Radisson and his brother-in-law, Médard Chouart des Groseilliers. The wits at the court of the Gay Monarch mocked at "the Radiah" and "the Gooseberry", but the stories they told came to the ear of King Charles the Second. The royal interest lead, in 1668, to

the fitting out of an expedition to barter trade goods with the Indians for furs. Of the two ships sent, one, the "Nonsuch" commanded by Captain Zachariah Gillam with Groseilliers on board, reached "the Bottom of the Bay", wintered there, and returned in 1669 with a rich cargo of furs. The London merchants who had backed the enterprise were jubilant and immediately applied for a Royal Charter which would give them the exclusive right to trade in the regions adjoining the Bay

CHARLES THE SECOND, BY THE GRACE OF GOD,
KING OF ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, FRANCE AND IRELAND,
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, TO ALL TO WHOM THESE
PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING

The Charter, dated 2nd May, 1670, was granted to "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay." It confirmed to them "the sole Trade and Commerce of all those Seas that lie within the Entrance of the Streights commonly called Hudson's Streights, together with all the Lands and Territories upon the Countries, Coasts, and Confines of the Seas aforesaid, with the Fishing of all Sorts of Fish, together with the Royalty of the Sea upon the Coasts within the Limits aforesaid, and all Mines Royal and the Land be henceforth reckoned and reputed as one of our Plantations or Colonies in America, called Rupert's Land."

That takes in a lot of territory — it enters our story because the opening of the route has now passed from the sea-captains to those adventurers who, in search of trade, opened trails into the vast interior of our land.

* * *

The Company of
Adventurers
establishes posts on
the shores of the
Bay,

The policy of the new Company was first to establish "forts" or "factories" as trading posts at the most favourable sites on the coast of the Bay. These were almost invariably at the mouths of rivers which afforded easy access for the Indians bringing furs for

barter. Charles Fort on Rupert's river, Hayes Island on the Moose river (later Moose Factory) and Albany Factory on the Chychevan river were speedily established around the Bottom of the Bay which for some years the Company regarded as its main sphere of operations. After some trouble with the French, who apparently did not regard too highly the Company's "sole rights" — as they demonstrated quite successfully on various occasions — more

northerly posts were established at the twin mouths of the Nelson and Hayes rivers, where as we have noted earlier, Sir Thomas Button had wintered. The new posts were named Port Nelson and York Factory or Fort York, but the former was speedily abandoned. The other settlement, York Factory, became for almost two centuries the Company's main entrepôt or supply-point for all its far-flung posts through its vast territories, the beginning of the historic way to the west.

Two years after the founding of York Factory, Captain John Abraham sailed from it in a small sloop to explore closely the coast to the north. He entered the mouth of that river where Jens Munck had wintered so disastrously. As this river, now named the Churchill in honour of the famous Duke of Marlborough, will loom large in our story later on, we may note here what came of Abraham's report on his voyage.

"That Churchill River Bee Settled this yeare with a Good Shipp a Competent Cargo for Trade and Materials for White Whale ffishings" — so ran one item in the Company's programme for the year 1688.

The following June a construction party with supplies from York Factory entered the river and work was begun on the building of the new post. On the first day of August the whole of the partially completed fort was razed to the ground by fire. Captain James Young, who had brought the party to what they considered as we have previously noted "A Miserable Place", strongly suspected what we should call today "sabotage," and doesn't hesitate to say so. In his Journal describing the 1717 settlement he notes that his men went—

"up the River as farr as they could go for rocks and stones but could not find a fitting place to build a house upon but at one place wch was worse than this, that is where formerly the English had built one wch they found so badd that After they had built it I believe they was so Discouraged that they sett it afire to Run away by the light of it.

*and a bold young
man makes a
remarkable journey
inland.*

Amongst those who had accompanied the construction party to Churchill was a young man whose four year term of apprenticeship had just expired. The Company appears to have regarded him highly for in the Letter Book appears a special order concerning him:

"that the boy Henry Kelsey be sent to Churchill river with Thomas Savage, because we are informed that he is an

active lad delighting much in Indians' company, being never better pleased than when he is travelling among them, nevertheless would not have him too soon trusted amongst these unknown natives without a pledge from the Indians."

Shortly after the arrival at Churchill young Kelsey, accompanied by the Indian lad, set out for the north--

"to discover and Endeavour to bring to a Commerce ye northern Indians Inhabiting to the Northward of Churchill and also ye dogside Nation."

The two travelled over a hundred miles, without meeting any Indians. The native boy however became increasingly terrified of the possibility of encountering Eskumce and Kelsey was forced to return. This journey, fruitless as it turned out, did establish the resourcefulness and the physical stamina of Henry Kelsey and led the Governor at York Factory to write the following year--

"This summer" (1690) "I sent up Henry Kelsey (who cheerfully undertook the journey) up into the country of the Assinoc Poots, with the Captain of that Nation to call, encourage and invite the remoter Indians to a Trade with us."

And so Henry Kelsey the "Discoverer of Canadian Prairies" was the first white man to traverse what is now the historic Route.

He describes his journey in his famous "Journal" long the object of bitter controversy. Joseph Robson, the builder of Fort Prince of Wales, who was hostile to the Company, vigorously attacked its authenticity. In his book he gave a meagre account of Kelsey and his friendship with "some distant Indians." Arthur Dobbs, another critic of the Company, was also emphatic in his doubts as to Kelsey's reliability; and the careful narrator, Captain W. Coats, from whose book, "The Geography of Hudson's Bay" we have previously quoted, notes judiciously, "Whether Mr. Kelsey was amongst those Western Indians when he travelled to cultivate the company trade or the more southerly Indians I am not well informed. This is certain that the Poots, Sene Poots, and Stone Indians have frequented York Fort for many years."

By a stroke of poetic justice Kelsey's story was fully corroborated through the discovery in 1926 in the Northern Records Office of Ireland of papers deposited there by Major Arthur F. Dobbs of Carrickfergus, a descendant of that Arthur Dobbs who had sailed the Bay. These papers confirm the story of Kelsey's journey from York Factory to a point in the vicinity of what is now the town of Swan River.

Henry Kelsey, then in his early twenties, set out from York Factory in 1691 and returned in 1692. His *Journal* opens with a rhymed introduction beginning:

Now reader read for I am well assured
Thou doest not know the hardships I endur'd
In this same desert where ever yet I have been
Nor wilt thou me believe without yet thou had seen
The emynent dangers that did often me attend
But still I lived in hopes yet it would amend . . .

He described how he arrived at what appears to be Cedar Lake near the present town of The Pas—

Gott on ye borders of ye Stone Indians Country
I took possession on ye 10 Inst. July
And for my Masters I speaking for ym all
This Neck of Land I Deering's Point did call . .

Leaving the Saskatchewan river he tramped with his Indians through heavily wooded country through mossy land and muskegs until on the 12th of August he came to a place where the ground began "to grow heathy and barren in fields of about half a mile just as if they had been artificially made with fine groves of Poplo (poplar) growing around ym." On the 19th he had reached more open prairie—

Today we had picht to ye outermost edge of ye woods;
this plain affords nothing but short round sticky grass and
Buffalo, and a great sort of bear which is bigger than any
White Bear and is neither white nor black but silver haired
like our English rabbit.

Kelsey's "Journal" reveals the personality of the intrepid young fur-trader who "delighted much in Indians' company." Here is a passage which shows his careful observance of their customs, his constant endeavour to impress upon them the policy of the Company, which was to stop them from making war upon each other.

August 15. This Instant one Indian Lying a dying and
withall a murmuring wch was amongst the Indians
Because I would not agree for ym to go to wars so I
taking it into Consideration cut some tobacco and called
all ye Old dons to my tent telling ym it was not ye way
for ym to have the use of English guns and other things
and yt I nor they should not go near ye Governor unless
they ceast from warring so lay still today.

August 16: Not knowing wch would conquer life or
Death lay still today our people going a hunting but
had small success.

August 17: Last night death ceased and this morning his body was burned according to their way they making a great feast for him yt did it now after ye flesh was burned his Bones were taken and buried with Loggs set up round of about ten feet long so we picht today near 14 miles and came to they holding it not good to stay by ye Dead.

We take leave of Kelsey, as he concludes his report on his two years journey:

So having not more to trouble you with all I am
Sir you most obedient and faithful servant to command

Henry Kelsey.

“ “ “

*Churchill is
founded,*

War came to the Bay and the Company of Adventurers knew dark days. They learned that all their forts at the Bottom of the Bay - Albany, Moose and Rupert — had been occupied by an overland force from Canada. Even more disastrous news was the loss of York to the brilliant soldier-seaman Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d' Iberville. For the greater part of the war years the Company's establishments in the Bay were in French hands. By the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, however, the posts and territories were surrendered to Britain, and once more the merchantmen of London sailed freely to the shores of the silent northern sea.

To repossess the Company's establishments came the veteran Captain James Knight as Governor, with Henry Kelsey, now in his forties, as Deputy Governor. Knight plays an important part in our story for it was he who first founded a permanent settlement on the Churchill river.

He was not very happy about it — but then to judge from his Journal (if you can read it) he was never very happy about anything. In 1715 the supply ship from England had actually arrived off Port Nelson but her captain Joseph Davis, through fear or ignorance, failed to locate the port and had returned to London with his cargo — an incident that Knight never failed to recall—

Now I shall write a Little of ye folly and Madness of Davis by the Description they give me as was aboard of him . He was not above Nine Leagues from ye Very Factory and had he but stood to the Westward less than half an hour he had raised all the woods on the South Shore

of our River Mouth; but instead of that he gott up his Anchor in the morning as it was by Stealth and Stood right out to Sea and never come that ways Afterwards but runn out of the River away to the Norward . . . the Blockhead Turnd Tail and Runn away under pretence of Wanting Water . . . I wonder he did not losse the Ship.

Knight had a very real purpose in founding Churchill. North of the river the Indians are Athapaaskans - Chipewyans (usually called the "Northern Indians"), Yellowknives (Copper Indians), Slaves and Dog-ribs. To the South roamed the Algonkins - mainly Crees, beyond these the Assiniboines (Kelsey's "Poots" or "Poets"). Between the Northern Indians and the Crees there was constant warring and no Chipewyan would venture far into Cree country. Knight complains that before his coming no one had ever seriously attempted to make peace amongst the Indians. He himself sent peace envoys far and wide - "I am Endeavouring to make a peace in the whole Country round from N. to SW for a 1,000 miles" he wrote in 1716. He was sadly disappointed but did his best - a fact which he did not forget to mention in his Journal.

July 14th 1717 - Wee Arrived this Day abt 2 a Clock of off Churchill River Mouth but did not get in twill 5. . .

What a word of Trouble has the Ships brought upon me, one of them by Returning back not finding his Port, the other by Arriveing here so late, wch has Quite Overthrowd and put by all my Designs and almost to the Ruin of the Company besides no Man in the world Ever could have taken better Methods than I have done Since I have been in the Country. Yett putt by in Everything and all by the folly and Neglect of Men for want of Doing thare Duty. And I May Safely Say it, there is hardly any Man Lveing besides My Self will be Able to Recover It Again If the Compy will be pleased to Give thareselves the trouble to read my Journall over they may See by it I have not been wanting in my Duty in any one Respect. . . .

Poor Captain Knight' He succeeded in founding Churchill, built a wooden fort there, called it, quite characteristically, "The Prince of Wale's Fort", and then turned his attention to certain matters whereof he had heard men speak in London, to which he himself had given careful thought, particularly when he heard "there is a parcell of Indians as lyes upon the next seas as has a Yellow Mettle as they make use of as these do Copper."

It was the gleam of gold in the icy wastes of the North that lured Knight to his death. The grim remains of his expedi-

tion were found fifty years afterwards by Samue. Hearne on Marble Island near Chesterfield Inlet where the veteran Governor (then over seventy years of age) had met his death in 1721.

and a great fort is
built—and
destroyed

"Among the most interesting military remains on this continent," so runs the official tablet of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, are the ruins of Fort Prince of Wales.

This is not Knight's wooden fort, but the massive stone bastion erected by his successors on Eskimo Point at the mouth of the Churchill river. As today it is one of the greatest tourist attractions along the Route, a brief note as to its building and its subsequent fate may well find a place in our story

Captain Knight had noted the promontory at the entrance to what is now the great harbour of Churchill.

I observ'd upon the Outer point of the River as wee came in abundance of Iakemays Tents Standing that it looked like a Town, and our people as put up ye Beacon (the advance party sent to the Churchill river) Sayth that they be very Large Tents bigg Enough to hold 50 people and that thare Tents was made so thick with Turf, Dart and Driftwood that they believed they had Wintred there.

To avoid a recurrence of the easy conquests of the Company's settlements by marauding naval expeditions, it was decided to erect here a stone fortress of the most recent type. British military engineers supplied the plans and the work began on the 6th of August 1731—

This Day we Lined and Picketed ye Fort on Eskemoe Point. It consisted of a Polygon 100 yds Square and Exterior Sides.

Spring was late the next year and not until June could the work be continued.

June 5 1732 Our Masons began to work on ye foundation that was Dugg last fall.

Two years later the chief factor Richard Norton reports.

16 April 1734 Sent six more hands to Eskemay Point wch makes ye Number of men there 36 So we can at all opportunities work two Waggins with men, and one with Cattle. In Drawing to ye work Stone and Clay or Rather Mudd

That same spring he made a notable experiment, highly successful — save for frequent accidents:

Try'd ye Experement of Blowing or Blasting of Large Rocks to Peices with Gunpowder wch I performed with Good Success and find it will be of Great Service towards ye Dispatch of our Building

Captain Christopher Middleton, sent out in 1741 with two small naval vessels the "Furnace" and the "Discovery" to resume the search for the elusive North West Passage wintered at the partially completed Fort. His Diary contains interesting accounts of life at Churchill during the long winter months.

Most of our Men Came down from the Old Factory (where the greater part of the crews were billeted) to the New in order to be suppld with Cloath to Make themselves Stockings, Caps, Mittens and Socks and a Coarse Blanket to wear over their other Cloaths. No person Could Endure the Cold in this Country without this Contrivance. The Shoes they were here are of the Leather of Deer-skins or Canvas made big enough to contain their feet when cover'd with Yarn Stockings and three pairs of socks of coarse Duffield over them, on their legs they wear a Large pair of cloath Stockings which Covers their Stockings and Breeches, upon their hands they wear a pair of cloath Mittens, lined with Beaver or Duffield, which reach up to their Elbows, and when they go abroad a pair of Snow Shoes 5 feet Long and 18 Inches broad to keep them from Sinking in the Snow, and on their Head a Cap of Beaver, which lets down round their Shoulders, yet all this will not prevent their freezing some Days.

Middleton was worried, as were all who wintered on that coast in the early days, by the prevalence of scurvy (The following passage from his Diary is taken from Barrow's edition of 1852 in which the style is modernized)

Notwithstanding this warm clothing almost every day some of the men that stir abroad, if any wind blows to the northward, are dreadfully froze, some have their arms, hands and faces, blistered and froze in a terrible manner, the skin coming off soon after they enter a warm house, and some have lost their toes. Now their lying in for the cure of these frozen parts brings on the scurvy in a lamentable manner. Many have died of it and few are free from that distemper. I have procured them all the helps I could from the diet this country affords in winter, — such as fresh fish, partridges, broths etc. and the doctors have used their utmost skill in vain, for I find that nothing will prevent that distemper from being mortal but exercise and stirring abroad.

The building of the fortress did not proceed without incident. A stone mason, Joseph Robson sent out in 1733 was highly critical of the faulty workmanship which he describes in his "An account of six years residence in Hudson's Bay." The fort seems to have been completed about 1771 when forty-two cannon were mounted on its ramparts. Across the channel, on the southern shore at Cape Merry, was a supporting battery of six twenty-four pounders.

But neither the strength of the walls nor the number of guns were of much avail when, in the Revolutionary War, the French allies of the revolting colonies sent a strong naval raiding force into the Bay. La Pérouse's orders were simply to do what damage he could to the British establishments there. He approached Fort Prince of Wales on the 9th of August 1782, disembarked 400 men and demanded the surrender of the fortress. Samuel Hearne, then governor, with a total force of 39 men did not fire a shot. The captors dismounted the guns, burned the houses, blew up, as far as they could, the massive walls, and sailed away with their booty.

Today the ruins still stand on Eskimo Point — "among the most interesting military remains on this continent"

* * *

In which a
sea-captain
describes what he
knew of our land,

It is interesting to ascertain the ideas of the men who visited York Factory and Churchill during the first half of the eighteenth century as to what lay beyond the shores they had come to know so well. Here is Captain William Coats at the mouth of the Churchill river about 1740

This river runs in from Usguemow Point near north and south, ten mile to Muskeeta Point, near the fall and then winds round to westward, and runs upwards of two hundred miles, where, with a small carriage, they arrive on the shore of the great lake, Winipeggon.

The Indians have many very expressive terms in their language. This river from its great length and breadth is called Manato-e-sepe, a sea-like river, this lake is called Winipeggon-e-sepe, or the great sea, is but htle inferiour to Hudsons Bay for breadth, and length and depth of water; and islands and woods scattered everywhere, and communicates with other lakes to southward, more of which hereafter; but also extends itself nearly NW to an indetermined distance

from the north western shores of which I judge our Miscota Indians come to Churchill River to trade every other year.

These Miscota Indians tell us some visionary storeys of ships and men of a different make and complexion frequenting these shores, for they are positive this lake is open to westward, and do attempt to describe their gilded beaks, and sails and other matters, both tedious and tiresome without we had better grounds.

This lake, or sea, Winnipeggon, so far we are pretty certain, is not above a hundred and seventy miles to westward of Churchill River, and that the southern extremity is in latitude of 59° N.

*and Anthony
Hendry views the
country*

June 26 1754 Paddled up Hays River from York Fort.

July 31. Level lands and burnt woods; and there are nothing but stagnated waters to drink. Came to two tents of Assinipoet Indians. I smoked with them and talked with them to go down to York Fort in the Summer but they answered "We are conveniently supplied from the Pagua-Mistagushewuk-Whiskehginish", that is the Frenchman's House of Trade

The writer is Anthony Hendry who had received permission from Governor James Isham of York Fort, to accompany a band of Assiniboines to their country. The brief extract tells of a new threat to the supremacy of the Company of Adventurers in those territories, the incursion of the French from Canada and the establishment by them of trading posts at strategic points along the great rivers of the western lands.

The intrepid explorer, Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Vérendrye had passed the Great Lakes and from a headquarters established on the Lake of the Woods he and his sons had pushed on towards the Western Sea. At The Forks, where the Assiniboine joins the Red he had built Fort Rouge, the first structure in what is now the great city of Winnipeg. Following the Assiniboine across the level plains which mark the bed of the glacial Lake Agassiz he had established Fort la Reine where Portage now stands. His sons, pushing northwards had discovered the inland lakes of which Captain Coats had such vague information. In 1741 they had established Fort Dauphin, explored Lake Winnipegosis and had followed the Saskatchewan river to Fort Paskola, or Basquia, on the present site of The Pas. It was high

time that the Company of Adventurers bestirred themselves if they wished to compete with such bold rivals for the furs of the Western Plains.

Hendry came to Fort Basquia. He was courteously received:

On our arrival two Frenchmen came to the waterside and in a very genteel manner invited me into their home which I readily accepted. One of them asked me if I had any letter from my master and where and on what design I was going inland. I answered I had no letter, and that I was sent to view the country and intended to return in the spring.

Let us glance briefly at a few entries in the "Journal of a Journey performed by Anthony Hendry to explore the country and to endeavour to increase the Hudson Bay Co's trade, A.D. 1784-1785," the first English exploration into the interior since Kelsey's adventure fifty years before.

Aug. 13 Level land, short grass, dry woods and several salt water lakes. We are now entering Muscuty plains (the Carrot River valley) and shall soon see plenty of Buffalo, and the Archithimie Indians (the Blackfeet) hunting them on Horseback.

Aug. 20 Travelled 15 Miles North; then came to Wapesekopet River (the South Saskatchewan) It is large; the banks are high, on which grow Birch, Poplar, Hazle, Elder, Fir etc. killed 5 Waakesew (red deer)

Hendry was then in the vicinity of what is now the thriving city of Saskatoon.

Sept. 5 Travelled 12 miles West. Level land with plenty of fruit trees; plenty of Moose, Waakesew, Swans, Cranes, White and Grey Geese and a few Ducks. We are yet in Muscuty plains (near Battleford)

Oct. 11 Travelled 7 miles SW by W then came to Waakesew River (Red Deer) and crossed it by a Fall about two feet high and much the same depth and 20 poles wide. On both sides there are stones of different sizes and weights and of an iron colour and a little distance from the river are veins of iron-ore running along the surface of the ground.

Hendry describes a ceremonial reception by the Blackfeet at which "Our leaders set several great pipes going the rounds, and we smoked according to their custom. Not one word was spoken." He invited them to send their young men with furs to the great waters. The chief made little answer, said it was far off and his people could not paddle. The next day.

The chief told me that his tribe never wanted food as they followed the buffalo, but he was informed the natives who frequented the settlements often starved on their journey, which was exceedingly true.

* * *

The Company
moves inland.

Hendry's journey was timely. Four years after his return Quebec fell — and with it fell New France. Into the territory in which our story is set streamed fur-traders from Montreal, no longer checked by racial rivalries. If the Company of Adventurers wished to retain any of the rich trade from the great plains immediate action would be necessary for the "Bourgeois du Nord-Ouest" from Montreal were establishing their posts wherever opportunity offered. To meet this challenge, the Company decided to move inland.

Samuel Hearne had already made history by his courageous exploration of the Coppermine river. He was the first white man to reach the Arctic Ocean, "to witness the tossing ice-floes of that green, lone, paleocryatic sea." He had discovered, not the North-West Passage, but a vast sub-continent—

"The continent of America is much wider than many people imagine, particularly Robson" (of Fort Prince of Wales fame) "who thought that the Pacific Ocean was but a few days' journey from the west coast of Hudson's Bay. This, however, is so far from being the case that when I was at my greatest western distance, upwards of 500 miles from Prince of Wales Fort, the natives, my guides, well knew that many tribes of Indians lay to the west of us, and they knew no end to the land in that direction, nor have I met with any Indians, either northern or southern, that had ever seen the sea to the westward."

This was the man whom the Company chose to strike the first blow to counteract "the interruptions to the trade from the Canadian pedlars."

In 1774 Hearne went west. Passing La Vérendrye's Fort Basquia he found the most strategic position at a point where water approaches from all directions were most favourable. Here on Sturgeon Lake he built Cumberland House, the oldest permanent settlement in what is now the province of Saskatchewan.

And with that building our story enters upon another stage.

STAGE III — PORT AND HINTERLAND

*In which the Route
is firmly established
and a Governor
holds Council
inland*

"That settlement which Mr. Hearne hath called Cumberland House, which is twenty-six feet broad, thirty-eight feet long and twenty-one and one-half feet in height" (Chief Factor Marten of York Fort was very precise) could not by any means be regarded as a pretentious

edifice — but it was situated less than a mile from a similar post already established by the Nor'Westers. That siting reflected the half-century-long struggle between the men from Montreal and the men from the Bay. The prize was the wealth of the West.

The struggle, although colourful, does not concern our story except in so far as the desire to secure advantages over the rival trading company led to the development of the trade routes. By the end of the century three trails led to the Forks, the junction of the Red and the Assiniboine, — now the metropolis of Winnipeg. From York Factory at the mouth of the Hayes River on Hudson's Bay the traders made their way upstream to the northern waters of Lake Winnipeg — thence south via the Lake and the Red river. From the western extremity of the Great Lakes, the men from Montreal came to the Lake of the Woods, hence via the Winnipeg river to the southern reaches of the Lake, and so up the Red to the Forks; or via the "War Road of the Sioux", the Roseau river near what is now the International Boundary, and hence down the Red. All journeys were made by boat with frequent portages.

We take up our story again with the founding of Norway House at the south end of Mosay Point at the entrance to Playgreen Lake, where the vast waters of the Red, the Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan rivers, with all their tributary streams, enter upon the last stage of their flow from Lake Winnipeg to the Bay.

Norway House was built by Norwegians who had been recruited into the Company's service to construct a road which would avoid the many rapids and portages between the Lake and the navigable portion of the Hayes river. This, the first Hudson's Bay Road, was abandoned after several winters' work on the project, but the Company's establishment now on Little Playgreen Lake remained and rapidly grew in importance.

This post entered the story of the opening of the Canadian west very dramatically during the troubles between the Hudson's Bay Company and its rivals. On several occasions the settlers of the Red River Colony sought refuge there. After the

amalgamation of the rival companies in 1821, Norway House became the headquarters of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land and the meeting place of the Council under the governorship of the "Emperor of the Fur Trade" — Sir George Simpson.

A remarkable man, this George Simpson. He came to Canada as a clerk in the service of the Company. In his later years, when he had become Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land, he had authority for judicial and administrative purposes over the greater part of what is now the Canadian West and also the Pacific North-West of the United States. A colourful man, too. Here is an account of him written by the Rev. R. G. Macbeth who as a boy had mingled with men and women who knew him well.

For nearly four decades he controlled largely, and in some degree autocratically, the destinies of the great Company, and he impressed a remarkably strong personality upon the history of the country. He was physically well endowed, was capable of an endless amount of work, had immense energy, possessed an affable, even jovial, disposition, and exercised this office with a strange mixture of benevolence and despotism, which suited the period and the land in which he lived. He had much fondness for the spectacular and in his constant travelling over his wide domain, dressed elaborately, had decorated canoes, gaily caparisoned horses, was accompanied by the skirl of the bagpipes, and entered the important trading posts with great ceremony and éclat. Bonfires blazed and guns saluted when the Governor came.

For a more intimate glimpse of the Governor let us glance at his own diary. The extract is of particular interest as it reveals some of the difficulties of travel in those early days of the West. Simpson is making a hurried journey from Fort Carlton on the Saskatchewan to Fort Garry on the Red to meet some of his factors.

Sunday, May 22nd, 1825. The last 24 hours have been the most uncomfortable I have ever passed, throughout the night we had an awful Thunder Storm and were drenched with Torrents of Rain and in the Morning we could scarce force our way through the Muschetoes, at 10 a.m. got to the forks of the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine Rivers where we fell in with a couple of plain Crees, I pressed these indolent rascals to guide us to Brandon House and offered them the value of 100 skins for that Service but they declined it with a variety of excuses such as danger of being cut off by war parties which they represented as very numerous, the risk of losing their Horses in crossing the Rivers, etc., so

they left us with most hearty curses from every one in our party. Made several ineffectual attempts to cross the Assiniboine River owing to its high state and the depth of mud at its edges. We had therefore to retrace our steps a little up the Qu'Appelle River and at length found a place which we considered passable but here we had a variety of difficulties, the water was too Deep and Wide, there was no Wood of any account to make a Raft, several of our people could not swim and the bottom and banks were soft so there was the utmost danger of drowning or miring our horses. in this dilemma we had nearly resolved on killing our horses and making Skin Canoes of their hides for the purpose of going down to the Settlement by Water, I however being more at home in the water than my fellow travellers and anxious to save the lives of our poor animals started to swim across with a few things, three others followed my example and by making several crossings in this way we got the whole of our little baggage over, the horses were driven across, those people who could not swim holding on to their tails and with the assistance of cords we hauled the poor animals out of the mud. In like manner we got across the Assiniboine River having been occupied five hours in effecting our passage over these two rivers. Nearly the whole of which time myself and those with me being naked in the Mud and Water exposed to the bloodthirsty assaults of Myriads of Munchetoes, in short I believe their never was an unfortunate Governor in such woeful plight as that of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land this day.

Sir George Simpson enters our present story mainly because under his administration was developed a vital link in the chain of posts that ran to the far stretches of the West and the North — the route from the port at York Factory to the inland headquarters of the Northern Department at Norway House. In a larger sense he enters our story because during his long term of office the way was prepared for the peaceful settlement of the vast territory to which that route led and still leads.

"Peaceful settlement! — that is the keynote from now on. We leave Sir George Simpson — his work done. Remember if you like, his bugles and bag-pipes, his bonfires, and his gaily caparisoned horses, his cannon salutes — all the pomp and ceremony of his progresses, remember too if you like his resentment at any infringement of what he considered the right of the Company — he, with his richly clad scarlet-plaid-caped Chief Factors, did establish a tradition of law and order and fair dealing — *Pro pelle cutem*. They found a vast wilderness — they planted and main-

tained long chains of outposts: they left a land ready for peaceful settlement."

* * *

*In which we follow
a gentleman
apprentice to the
fur trade over the
route in the year
1867*

1867 — a momentous year in our annals, a fact which we recall each July the First. On the day when the British North America Act came into operation and the four provinces of the East became the Dominion of Canada, a young lad, Isaac Cowie, was on board the "Prince Rupert" bound for York Factory to enter upon his apprenticeship to the Hudson's Bay Company. The account of his journey as told in his book, "The Company of Adventurers", gives us a first-hand description of our Route at the time of its greatest importance. Let us leaf through the pages of this vivid personal record:

On August 11th the anchor was cast in York Roads in the turbid estuary of the Nelson River, twenty miles from the Factory and out of sight of land, the high beacon twelve miles off on the Point of Marsh, between the Nelson and Hayes rivers only being visible from aloft.

Cowie, with his fellow-passengers who were also entering the service of the Company disembarked at York Factory on the 14th of August.

The first thing that impressed me was the smell of spruce, which seemed all-pervading and as characteristic of the country as peat-reek is in country places in Scotland.

The quarters provided in the "Summer House" for transients of Cowie's rank were bare but he was impressed by the blaze of decorations on the walls of "Bachelors' Hall", the residence of the permanent clerks.

The walls were hung with Indian silk and bead and wool work of every hue, which adorned the attire of these "veterans" from head to foot, also their gun coats, shot pouches, firebags and snowshoes, all of which were hung up round the room, alongside of coloured prints of prize-fighters, race horses, hunting scenes, ships and yachts and photographs of all kinds.

He was impressed too by the importance of York Factory.

Although Fort Garry was the residence of the Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land (if an official whose duties

demanded constant travel through the length and breadth of the vast Hudson Bay territories could be said to have any fixed abode) and also the headquarters of the district of Assiniboua, commonly known as the Red River Settlement, yet in the year 1867 and for four or five years afterwards the ancient York Factory still retained its pre-eminence as the seaport and storehouse for the imports and exports of the northern department of the territories, excepting only supplies brought from St. Paul, Minnesota, chiefly for the Red River Settlement, and the Buffalo robes which were also sent via St. Paul to Montreal for the American market.

He describes the Factory and notes the few remaining signs of anything military. Situated about five miles up the Hayes river, the strong picket palisade enclosed about five acres of ground.

The site of the Factory was a mossy bog originally, and the "gardens" within its pickets were artificially formed by placing thick layers of willows on the moss and covering them with a layer of soil brought from upstream. Frequent chilly winds off the Bay checked the growth of the few hardy plants tried in the gardens. But in a sheltered spot, about three miles further up the river, and nearly a mile up the creek, there is good soil, where the Company formerly raised good potatoes, onions, carrots and turnips, small peas and large rhubarb and cabbage. The wild fruits of the country near the factory consist of cranberries, moss and gooseberries, red and black currants.

The sides and rear of the enclosure were formed of high pointed pickets. Inside running parallel with these were rows of buildings, used as storerooms, dwellings, offices and workshops. The whole enclosure was divided into a front and back quadrangle by the large depot — two hundred feet square — which faced the front gate. This warehouse was built with a hollow square or court in the middle and was flanked by long low buildings on the right and left, used as the officers' mess and summer quarters for visitors respectively.

All the buildings were of logs, clapboarded, nicely painted and plank roads led to and past them. The whole establishment was beautifully clean and neat, but since then, with the fallen importance of the place, many of the buildings have been demolished, or have become out of repair.

From the Factory a brigade of four boats manned chiefly by Swampy Cree Indians set out on September 4th for Lower Fort Garry. Cowie describes how they "tracked" up the Hayes river

Unless they are favoured by a fair wind the boats are towed up the Hayes by the crew scrambling along the shore through mud and brush and all kinds of obstacles, the cars being chiefly used to cross the stream to the side offering the best footing, which is seldom, if ever, good. Whilst thus "tracking" one half of the crew remains aboard while the other half tracks ashore, and they relieve each other every half-hour. The men go at a quick pace, and even at a trot whenever the current favours them, attaching their portage straps to the tow line and passing the browbands over their "inshore" shoulders.

Two famous travellers, Sir John Franklin and Sir George Simpson, have paid tribute to the endurance of the Orkney boatmen and the French Canadian voyageurs who were usually employed in earlier days on such journeys as Cowie made in 1867. Franklin describing his voyage from York Factory up the Hayes in 1819 writes:

"It is not easy for any but an eye-witness to form an adequate idea of the exertions of the Orkney boatmen in the navigation of this river. The necessity they are under of frequently jumping into the water, to lift the boats over the rocks, compels them to remain the whole day in wet clothes at a season when the temperature is far below the freezing point. The immense loads too which they carry over the portages, is not more a matter of surprise than the alacrity with which they perform these laborious duties."

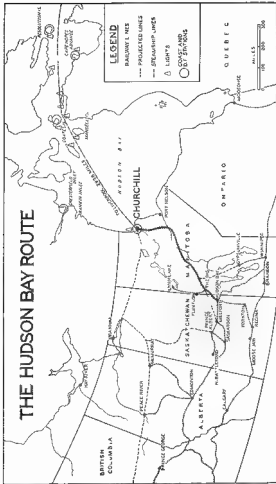
And Sir George Simpson whose French Canadian voyageurs once took him from York Factory to the Pacific Coast in thirty-eight days says:

"Such was the routine of our journey, the day, generally speaking, being divided into six hours' rest and eighteen hours labour. This almost incredible toil the voyageurs bore without a murmur, and almost invariably with such hilarity of spirit as few men could sustain for a single afternoon. But the quality of the work even more decidedly than the quantity requires operatives of iron mould."

Cowie notes the changing scenery as they proceed up the river.

The tamarack, spruce, poplar and willows growing along the bank became of larger growth as we proceeded upstream. The scenery changed to beauty and variety. All vegetation had begun to put on the glorious hues of autumn.

THE HUDSON BAY ROUTE



They meet a down-stream brigade.

On the 17th of September we made a portage past Trout Falls, a sixteen foot drop, and while at dinner above it we heard the regular rattling of oars at a distance, heralding the coming of a brigade down stream. Very soon the Portage la Loche brigade of four boats flashed past, and taking the cascade at full speed, disappeared one after the other over the brink, with a final flourish of the steering oar. The boats were under the veteran Red River guide, Baptiste Bruce, and manned by Métis, all gaily decorated in fancy shirts and feathers, just as they had embarked that morning at Oxford, after a ball, attended by the beauty and fashion of that vicinity, which had been kept up till daylight. As the crews swung to their oars in dashing style, they seemed as able to row all day as to dance all night.

Passing Oxford House, Cowie saw the wrecks of several of the quaint Red River carts, relics of the attempt to use the first Hudson Bay Road which we noted above. The boats were dragged overland over the height of land which divides the headwaters of the Hayes and the Nelson. He remarked on the Echemamis ("The stream which runs both ways") and sailing up the Nelson with a good breeze they came on the 24th of September to the Little Playgreen Lake on the shores of which was Norway House.

The young gentleman apprentice was duly impressed by the importance of the beautifully situated receiving and distributing depot of the Northern Department.

Norway House continued to grow in importance as the inland centre from which the whole boat transportation system of the Northern Department was controlled and at which it focussed. It advanced a big stride when it instead of the distant York Factory became the regular annual meeting-place of the officers coming from and returning to such immense distances as Fort Vancouver at the mouth of the Columbia River, New Caledonia and Mackenzie River.

To the inland depot on Playgreen Lake there came in state by flying express canoes manned by the mighty French Canadian and Iroquois voyageurs, bearing the great Governor Simpeon from Montreal. Other great voyageurs brought to Norway House the chief factors from Columbia, New Caledonia, Mackenzie River, Athabasca, Saskatchewan, Swan River, Red River and Lac la Pluie.

While the grandees were holding solemn conclave in the council hall, and sealing the fates and fortunes of the fur

trade and its employees for the year, the voyageurs in the encampments outside the stockades held high festival.

Such was Norway House in its heyday — about the time when Canada entered into Confederation.

* * *

In which the blast
of an engine-whistle
is heard at Fort
Garry and the Old
Route is used no
more.

Governor Simpson is reported to have said that for the Northern Department of the Hudson Bay Company's territories three really good men were required: one at York Factory to make out the requisitions, one at Norway House to superintend the transport, one at Red River to manage the Settlement.

That remark gives the general picture of the functions of the major establishments in the West in the years immediately preceding the creating of the Province of Manitoba and the taking over by Canada of the vast holdings of the Hudson's Bay Company under the charter of 1670.

Under the new regime the posts and the Route did not immediately lose their importance, for trade still flowed through York Factory to the West. But already, even before the transfer, the old route from the Bay had begun to decline. In 1867 the long-drawn hoot of a river steamer was heard at Fort Garry, as English and American goods arrived over the rapidly expanding railway system of the United States and the navigable Red River.

Then, ten years later, the note of doom was sounded for the historic route by the shrill blast of the whistle of the gallant locomotive, the "Countess of Dufferin", which now stands proudly before the main entrance of the C.P.R. depot in Winnipeg. Gibbon in his "Steel of Empire" describes the arrival:

"On October 9th, 1877, the stern-wheeler of Hills' Red River Transportation Company, the "Selkirk", decorated with flags, evergreens, and a banner emblazoned with the letters 'C.P.R.', pushing a barge in front and with barges at each side, arrived at Point Douglas, Winnipeg, with a locomotive named the "Countess of Dufferin", in addition to six flat cars and a van for service on the Pembina Branch now extended to St. Boniface. The new arrival had been greeted by a salute of American artillery as it passed Fort Pembina, and was welcomed in Winnipeg with whistles, bells, banners, bunting and a special edition of 'The Manitoba Free Press' which had advertised 'a grand rally of citizens'."

Eight years later, William Cornelius Van Horne, called upon to speak when the last spike was driven at Craigellachie in the Eagle Pass, responded

"All I can say is that the work has been well done . . . in every way."

The Canadian Pacific Railway ran from Coast to Coast — and the old Hudson's Bay Route lay forgotten.

Not entirely! At Norway House you may read on the Historic Sites and Monuments plaque these words:

NORWAY HOUSE

BUILT ON JACK RIVER IN 1812-13 BY THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY. IT WAS REBUILT ON THIS SITE IN 1825 AND WAS A FREQUENT MEETING-PLACE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT OF RUPERT'S LAND.

HERE THE REV JAMES EVANS INVENTED THE CREE SYLLABIC SYSTEM

IN 1875, TREATY NO. 5 WAS MADE HERE WHEREBY THE SALTEAUX AND SWAMPY CREES CEDED THEIR RIGHTS IN ABOUT 1,000 SQUARE MILES IN THIS VICINITY

Since its decline as the centre of the Company's transportation system Norway House has taken on a new importance as a centre for the administration of health and welfare services amongst the Crees to whom Evans ministered so faithfully. Schools, hospitals and administration buildings have given a new significance to the famous House on the Little Playgreen Lake.

York Factory became largely derelict in its muskges to spring again into the public eye in the twentieth century when interest in the Route revived — but that is another part of our story.

And Churchill? As an entrepôt for the northern fur trade it had always retained a certain importance. As to what the massive fortress looked like in the closing years of the nineteenth century let us take a passage from "Across the Sub-Arctic of Canada" by J. W. Tyrrell who visited the ruins in November, 1893:

"Not a tree or other sign of life could be seen on the long, low, snow-driven point of rock, but there in all its solitary massive grandeur stood the remains of what had more than 100 years ago been a noble fortress. . . .

"As La Pérouse left the fort so we find it. For the most part the walls were still solid, though from between their

great blocks of granite the mortar was crumbling. The guns spiked and dismounted were still to be seen lying about on the ramparts and among the fallen masonry. In the bastions, all of which were still standing, were to be seen the remains of wells and magazines, and in the centre of the fort stood the walls of the old building in which Hearne and his men had lived. The charred ends of roof beams were still attached to its walls, where undecayed they had rested for the past 111 years."

* * *

Part II — The New Route

*In which the old
order passes away,*

The old Hudson Bay route had flourished in the days of sailing ships and York boats. Trading centres on the Bay had drawn tribute in furs from trading posts inland and the myriad waterways of Rupert's Land hurried cargoes of furs to the ocean. But technology proved stronger than sentiment. The building of a trans-Canada railway disrupted the established pattern of trade. The railway cut through the hinterland of the old empire bringing bulk goods to the inland settlements and providing an easy means for the export of raw furs. Trade through the old route dwindled, though the northern reaches, far from the railways, held fast to the old route.

Thus the old order passed away in the West. Steam boats navigated the Red and Saskatchewan rivers, and railway trains crossed the prairie, as the tentacles of a mechanical civilization reached at last into this great lone land. The long boat trip, the arduous portage, the physical exertion, the remoteness — these had hitherto excluded all but the adventurous and the bold. The railway ran as surely for the timid as for the daring. It hauled bulk products as cheaply for the native as for the easterner. Its fitful hooting in time quite drowned out the cheerful chant of the voyageur.

*and gives place to
the new*

The scattered British colonies in North America drew together in Confederation in 1867. The newly formed Dominion of Canada acquired the North West Territories by purchase from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870. In that same year Manitoba became a Province of the Dominion. In 1871 British Columbia became the sixth province of Canada. West of the Great Lakes a vast hinterland lay ready for development. Yet this land — empty and potentially rich — did not at once attract settlers. The Canadian government set about attracting immigrants with offers of cheap land, but it was disappointing work. Potential immigrants were drawn off to the United States. Many Canadians migrated, it being an easier step to the populous States than across or around the wilderness of Northern Ontario to the Red River Valley or the distant Saskatchewan.

Meanwhile the Canadian West was changing. The Indian tribes "made treaty" and moved to Reservations leaving the greater part of the prairies open for immigration. A great transcontinental

railway crossed the plains surmounting the massive rock barriers east and west. The "Great Lone Land" lay empty, waiting for the new day to dawn.

The Day came. Before the turn of the century groups of immigrants had arrived in the expanding province of Manitoba. As early as 1876, Captain Jonasson had founded New Iceland on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, and in the same decade Mennonite settlements were established in the Red River Valley. In the 'nineties the trickle grew to a flood as extensive Ukrainian communities found new homes in the west. The Dominion Government encouraged immigration, not only from the British Isles, but also from the United States and continental Europe. And English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, French, German, Icelandic, American, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, Ukrainian, Polish, Italian, Austrian, Galician and Belgian pioneers came to settle and mingle in the prairie land.

Wherever arable land could be had it was put under the plough. Acre by acre these newcomers broke the land and every year the flood of grain back out of the West increased. Sceptics had said that the Canadian Pacific wouldn't earn enough money to pay for the grease for its axles. Soon it was not big enough to carry the grain. Two more transcontinental lines pushed across the plains swinging settlement north. In through Winnipeg and west poured a multitude of settlers, out through Winnipeg and east rolled a tide of golden grain. Branch lines spread like spider-webs. Two new provinces, Saskatchewan and Alberta were added to the Dominion. All of Canada felt the rich diet of wheat. The new farmers wanted furniture, machinery, clothes, food. The central provinces hastened to supply them and to pre-empt the prairie market for themselves. The vast hinterland developed until nearly two and a half million people inhabited the prairie provinces and the value of the annual wheat crop soared to the hundreds of millions of dollars.

In which landmen
look again to
Hudson's Bay

The growth of population in the West and the consequent tremendous increase of agricultural production brought on anxiety over markets. The traditional and at the same time the most attractive markets were in Europe. Access was difficult because of lack of railways. Canadian enterprise set out to make these more accessible not only through railway extension but also through waterway improvement. One obvious answer was the building of a short line to the sea — and, as the map plainly showed, the shortest route from the West to the ocean must lead to Hudson Bay.

The old historic route had not passed out of men's minds. It had fallen into disuse but the flavour of its heyday lingered long in the West with the result that the efficacy of this outlet to the sea became almost legendary. And so, as early as the eighties, there had been talk of building a railway to a port on the shores of Hudson Bay. The federal government viewed the project with such favour that it made a standing offer, from the year 1886 to the year 1908, of a land grant to anyone who would build a railway to the Bay from the West. Hugh Sutherland, in the middle eighties, received a land grant from Sir John Macdonald's government for such a purpose, and actually built 40 miles of roadbed out of Winnipeg before his resources failed.

Interest in a Hudson Bay Railway mounted when, as becomes a democracy, the question became a public issue and nosed into the political arena. Both federal parties approved the project during the 1904 federal election. The elections held in 1905 in the two newly formed provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta still further concentrated interest on the Hudson Bay route. Again both parties supported the project as providing a cheap and direct outlet for the products of Western Canada.

Support was not confined to political bodies. Speaking at Winnipeg on February 2, 1905, J. W. Tyrrell, who had made four trips through Hudson Strait and five across the Bay, said

I have been strongly impressed with the great value of the Hudson's Bay and the Strait route, and I am firmly convinced that it is bound to be in the not very distant future the great outlet for the produce of the Canadian North West.

Later in his book *Across the sub-Arctic of Canada* he wrote

I would say that the proposition to open up a route for commerce through Hudson Bay and Strait is, in my opinion, a wise and perfectly feasible move, both because of the service it will render in developing the local resources of the country, and because of the additional transportation facilities it will afford for the products of Western Canada.

There were of course those who spoke of the dangers of the Northern route. Agnes C. Laut in her *"The Conquest of the Great North-West"* made a vigorous attack on the hesitant and over cautious

After giving an account of three wrecks in four years, I hope it may not seem inconsistent to say that I believe the next century will see a Hudson's Bay route to Europe. What — you say — after telling of three wrecks in four years? Yes — what Atlantic port does not have six wrecks in ten

years* New York and Montreal have more. If the Hudson's Bay route is not fit for navigation, the country must make it fit for navigation. Of telegraphs, shelters, lighthouses there is not now one. Canals have been dug for less cause than the Upper Narrows of Hudson Straits. If Peter the Great had waited till St Petersburg was a fit site for a city, there would have been no St. Petersburg. He made it fit. The same problem confronts North-West America to-day. It is absurd that a population of millions has no seaport nearer than 2,000 miles. Churchill or York would be seaports in the middle of the continent. Of course there would be wrecks and difficulties. The wrecks are part of the toll we pay for harnessing the sea. The difficulties are what make nations great.

The interest thus awakened caught the popular fancy. This was the era of Canada's greatest railway expansion and railways were thought to be a panacea for most economic ills. The Canadian Northern Railway Co. took advantage of the federal land grant offer to construct a line from Etoumvi, later Hudson Bay Junction and now Hudson Bay, to The Pas. By the close of 1906 the Dominion Government had issued eight charters for railway lines to Canada's inland sea. Enthusiasm welled high. As A. H. de Trémaudan put it in *The Hudson Bay Road*

One after another the reports of seamen and others who had visited the Northern waters were unearthed, and their statements showing the immense saving to be effected in transportation charges by the shortening of the grain route by 1,000 miles were published. hardly any attention was paid to the obstacles in the way, such as danger from ice, short season, etc. The new route was commercially desirable, public opinion considered it commercially practicable. Manitoba's Leader of the Opposition speaking at Winnipeg on November 13 went so far as saying that if the Dominion Government would not take up the Hudson Bay Railway the Liberals of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta would do so, thereby supplementing what Hon. Walter Scott had stated in Ottawa on July 26. "After all is said and done the people of Western Canada refuse to take their eyes off the Hudson's Bay route. For twenty years they have been looking that way. It is now brought to the point where concrete terms are being considered. The Prime Minister is most favourably impressed and I have the utmost confidence that the Hudson's Bay Railway will, within a comparatively short time, be an actuality." This declaration of the Saskatchewan Premier was the result of the resolution passed unanimously in his House, declaring the construction of the Hudson Bay Railway "neces-

sary for the commerce of Canada and for the full development of the agricultural and other resources of the Dominion."

Promoters of the Bay route felt a thrill of satisfaction when Sir Wilfrid Laurier speaking in the House of Commons February 22, 1907, declared:

This is not the first time that we have heard of the opening of a railroad to Hudson Bay; the project is as old as the first settlements in the Northwest Territories. But the question has become of more acute importance than ever before on account of conditions which have recently developed in the new provinces.

He goes on to explain how the rapid rise in population and in productivity in the West has quite overtaxed the existing railroad lines even though these railway companies were acquiring new rolling stock. He continues:

But there is one thing still more needed, that is an outlet to the sea and the outlet to the sea is to be found in Hudson Bay I may say at once that I do not admit that there can be any antagonism in this respect between the east and the west. . . What is doing good for the west is doing good for the east and vice versa,

And later, again in the House of Commons, Sir Wilfrid said:

It is not enough for us to confine our views to Canada, that is now settled, we must look ahead. We must push northward as far as colonization can go. I have great confidence that before many years are past we shall see towns and villages on the shores of Hudson Bay, like those we see on the shores of Norway, where people will be prosperously engaged in the lumbering business, the pulp industry, the mining industry, and others. That is what I hope Canadians will see ere long

And finally there came the definite commitment when Sir Wilfrid Laurier speaking at Niagara Falls, September 18, 1908, said:

We have undertaken the construction of another railway, the Hudson's Bay Railway. . . At the present time all the wheat as soon as it is tracked is sent out to Lake Superior. We want to provide another railway by Hudson's Bay. There will then be the present route and the Hudson's Bay route, and the man who raises wheat and cattle will have two outlets for his production . . . the trade of Canada is too great even for these two outlets. . . The government will build the

railway, or rather somebody will be entrusted with building it for us, but whatever we do, all the terminals and all the elevators shall be built by the government, and retained under all and every circumstance by the government so as to insure the largest measure of benefit possible to the Canadian people in the North-West Provinces.

*In which a railway
to Hudson's Bay is
begun,*

Planning for the Hudson Bay Railway began as soon as the Canadian government committed itself to the construction. The former land provision, wherein land grants had been offered anyone who would build a railway to the Bay from the West, was withdrawn in 1908. The Department of Railways and Canals then appointed an engineer of its own to organize surveys and report on the cost of a railway from The Pas to Hudson Bay. Funds to pay for the undertaking were to come from the sale of public lands in the West. In this way the construction of the line would in nowise be a drain on federal funds. In anticipation of the settlement of Churchill as the terminus of the route the Department of the Interior laid out a townsite there in 1908.

— The first actual construction on the much-discussed Hudson Bay Railway took place in the fall of 1910, when Hon. Geo. Graham, Minister of Railways, turned the first sod at The Pas. During the winter, work on the piers of the huge 850 foot bridge across the Saskatchewan River at that point was commenced. Inexplicably work on the bridge stopped in the spring of 1911 and nothing was done during the summer on the balance of the road. In the early fall, however, the contract for the first 185 miles of road was let and work resumed. During 1912 contracts for the rest of the roads were let.

*and Nelson is
chosen as the
terminal port.*

Trémaudan tells us:—
Arrangements were also made the same year by the Department of Railways and Canals for sending a thoroughly equipped expedition to Hudson Bay, and in June the Arctic and Minto left to make surveys and investigate the coast between Fort Churchill and Port Nelson, and to make a magnetic survey of the bay and strait. Decision as to the harbour to be chosen as terminus was withheld pending investigation made at the two ports by Mr. Hazen, a port engineer of vast experience.

During 1912 the boundaries of Manitoba were extended northward to latitude 60 and both Fort Churchill and Port Nelson were henceforth to be in Manitoba.

The survey of the route meanwhile went on and Mr. Armstrong, chief engineer, submitted a Report of the Hudson's Bay Railway Surveys in 1909. Trémaudan quotes the Report as follows, dealing first with the Churchill route:

The first 150 miles are common to the two routes. Taking the Churchill route first, the first section, approximately 120 miles, is through comparatively level or smooth country, affording easy grades and cheap construction: the country is underlain with limestone in horizontal beds. Seventy per cent. of the grading is in clay loam, thirty per cent. in sand, gravel, swamp or muskeg. "It may be remarked here that what is called muskeg in this country is not true muskeg, but would be more properly defined as swamp. Good bottom is usually obtained at a depth of 3 or 4 feet, and very seldom exceeds 7 or 8 feet." Steel bridges will be required over the Saskatchewan and Frog Rivers. The second section of 120 miles is through granite country: rock cuttings will be necessary. From the 240th mile to the 360th mile the roughest country is encountered, there being the rise between the two basins of the Nelson and the Churchill. The summit is not very high, but the approaches are rather sudden and steep. The fourth section, extending beyond the 360th mile to Fort Churchill, will not require much yardage but the northern 70 miles over the tundra or barren lands may prove quite expensive on account of the perpetual frost.

The Nelson route was also reported on:

The description given for the first division of the Churchill route may be applied in a general way to the whole of the Nelson route, with little rock work, much clay loam, and small percentages of sand, gravel and swamp: there is no tundra on this route.

Mr. Armstrong also reported in detail on the advantages and disadvantages of Port Churchill and Port Nelson as terminals on the bay. His report follows:

Port Churchill is at the mouth of the Churchill River, where the river passes through a large tidal flat or lagoon mostly dry at low tide, except near the outlet to the sea. The lagoon is surrounded by hills consisting of rock at the sea outlet and of sand and gravel further up the river. The only available situation for docks at present is out near Cape Merry with the railway terminals from two to three miles

up stream. Another town-site is available on the west side, but it would be somewhat difficult to get railway and dock sites.

There is no possibility of improving the Churchill River so as to give inland communication by water owing to its shallowness over its many wide and frequent rapids. The neighbourhood of Port Churchill is practically destitute of all forest growth for miles in all directions, the vegetation being restricted to masses and patches of coarse grasses along the edges of the water areas.

The main fresh water supply is obtained from the numerous small lakes in the neighbourhood and is of excellent quality. . . .

. . . with the ebb tide the current attains a velocity of from six to eight miles per hour creating a somewhat difficult entrance for low-powered ships. . . .

The harbour usually freezes over about November 15. . . . The usual date for the opening of the harbour is about June 19. . . .

At the present time very little shelter can be had at low tide by any ship drawing over 18 or 20 feet of water. Space to accommodate two or three ships of this size might be had, but anything larger would have to anchor almost in front of the entrance, which being about three-quarters of a mile, allows the full force of the seas to be felt. . . . The bottom consisting of mud, affords a fairly good holding ground for anchors. . . .

Excavating for ships' berths close inshore to avoid the heavy drift ice will probably encounter solid rock, as the solid rock in several places runs to the water edge. . . .

Fort Churchill being practically upon the open sea, can only be defended by strong forts and batteries placed in the immediate neighbourhood of the port itself.

So much for Churchill. And Mr. Armstrong has this to say about Port Nelson:

Port Nelson is at the mouth of the Nelson River while York Factory is situated at the mouth of the Hayes River, about fifteen or eighteen miles from Port Nelson.

A good site for terminals and town may be had in the vicinity of the point marked on the chart. Above this point the banks come higher and much more abrupt.

. . . An abundant supply of fresh water may be had either from the Nelson River itself or from various smaller streams and lakes in the vicinity.

Loading Grain at Churchill



Grain elevators at Churchill, Man. In foreground is Churchill River; in background is Hudson Bay



Courtesy National Film Board

During the winter more or less ice floats up and down the open channel with the tides, but being very scattered no jams ever occur.

The anchorage being some nine or ten miles in from the mouth of the channel no serious sea is ever experienced which may cause trouble to anything larger than canoes or row-boats. The condition of the seas at Port Nelson will probably be found to resemble those experienced at Quebec on the St. Lawrence. The bottom is of sufficient stiffness to furnish a secure holding ground for anchors.

The material in the flats consists of blue clay with an occasional pocket of coarse sand and gravel with boulders scattered thinly around. In the channel the material is a very stiff blue clay, affording excellent holding ground for anchors. Probably all of the material can be handled by dredges at a very low cost, and may be used for reclamation works around the docks.

The defence of Nelson from hostile fleets will be comparatively easy, the long, comparatively narrow channel approach being easily rendered impregnable by means of sea mines. . The establishment of strong batteries and forts at Sam's Creek would seem to be all that is necessary to render Port Nelson absolutely unassailable.

It might be mentioned here in passing, the greatly increased difficulty a hostile fleet would have on blockading the Atlantic coast of Canada were the Hudson Bay route opened. The fact that ships may enter and leave Port Nelson all the year round is a fact worth remembering when the possibilities of war are considered.

The engineer presented in addition detailed estimates of the costs involved for the construction of a railway to each of these points, along with the necessary harbour works for each. Allowing for the use of the heavier 80 lb. rail as recommended the total cost for the Nelson route and port facilities was approximately 21.5 millions of dollars and that for the Churchill route and port facilities was just over 25.5 millions of dollars or a difference of about four million dollars in favour of Port Nelson. In the light of the findings of the engineer it was tentatively decided in 1912 to carry the line to Port Nelson. This decision was approved at a conference held in February, 1913 when the facts as they were then known were reviewed.

In anticipation of the choice of Port Nelson as the terminus an engineer had been sent to the mouth of the Nelson

River to survey a town-site. Meanwhile the Naval Service had begun a hydrographic survey of the Nelson estuary in 1911. In 1912 an engineering party went overland to Port Nelson to prepare for construction operations. The following year, ships sailed from Halifax with stores and materials for use in building operations at the terminus. Construction work progressed steadily until 1918.

But the dream fails
of fulfilment.

During these years work on the railway also went ahead. By the end of 1918 the right of way had been cleared and graded all the way to Port Nelson.

Steel bridges had been erected at Manitou Rapids, over the Nelson River, and also at Kettle Rapids. Rails had actually been laid as far as the latter point, though service was operated only as far as mile 214 from The Pas. In 1918 the cumulative shortages of ships and supplies, brought on by the war, forced a halt in construction work on both port facilities and roadbed. Port Nelson at that time boasted a plant and buildings for a construction camp, a partially completed artificial island adjacent to the proposed ship channel, and a steel bridge two-thirds of a mile long connecting the island and the mainland. The road bed was completed while the steel had reached some 322 miles from The Pas to the Bay. The dream had been so near fulfilment.

In which is heard
the cry "On to the
Bay".

The chief reasons for discontinuing operations on the Bay Railway stemmed from the financial difficulties imposed by the war. The Drayton-Actworth report of 1917 must have

influenced the decision for it has this to recommend:

We understand that construction work on the Hudson Bay line has been suspended (due to a prevailing labor shortage). We think that the work should not in any case be recommended until more urgent needs have been met and money is more procurable.

Speaking then of the financial burden imposed on Canada by the war the report recommends that,

"everything that can be done should be done to make this burden as small as possible"

and it concludes with this note:

"we recommend that future expenditures on the Hudson Bay Railway be reduced to the lowest possible amount".

This was in keeping with the prevailing mood. Canada had never shouldered so overwhelming a financial burden as that imposed by the war. Economy and retrenchment were considered guides to policy. But in spite of money shortages, labour shortage and steel shortage the Minister of Railways and Canals promised in the House of Commons late in 1919 that the Hudson Bay road would be completed "just as soon as the financial conditions of the country will permit."

In 1920 a special committee of the Senate was appointed to take evidence and report upon the navigability and fishery resources of Hudson Bay and Strait, and of the character of the ports of Hudson Bay with regard to their fitness as railway terminals. The Committee had this to say on the choice of a port.

Your Committee took a large amount of evidence regarding the relative merits of the two western ports, Churchill and Nelson, and there was a considerable divergence of opinion among the different witnesses as to which of the two should have been selected, having in view the shorter railway haul in the one case and the cheaper construction of the port itself in the other. Churchill was shown to be an absolutely land locked harbour entirely protected from every wind no matter from which quarter it should blow, where a few ships could at all times ride at anchor in perfect security. Nelson on the other hand has no natural protection from the sea except such as it receives by reason of its remoteness from the body of the sea, there being a twenty mile stretch of shallows between it and deep water. A narrow channel bordered by wide shallows connects the proposed harbour of Nelson with the open bay. A very large amount of money has already been expended upon the harbour improvements of Nelson, but a much larger sum is still required before the present plans can be carried out. There seems to be considerable doubt whether or not, even when the proposed plans are completed, the harbour at Nelson will be an entirely safe one against an easterly gale. To utilize Churchill it would be necessary to build about eighty miles of road across a country which has been described by one witness as very difficult, it having a stretch of thirty miles of morass almost impossible to cross owing to the difficulty of getting a firm foundation for the roadbed. This is, however, denied by the testimony of two witnesses of each of whom the Committee was greatly impressed. Both J. B. and J. W. Tyrell testified that there was a perfectly good and comparatively short route from the present route deflecting at a point some fifty-six miles from Nelson and going north and east to Churchill.

In the meantime, the laying of the rails could be completed to Nelson, and that port could be used for the present in its present state . . .

The Committee after reporting on other aspects of the region reported these findings:-

- (1) That the Hudson Bay Route is feasible and will probably in time be profitable.
- (2) That the season of navigation under present conditions is at least four months in length and may by reason of improvements in aids to navigation be considerably increased.
- (3) That in the opinion of this Committee sufficient care was not taken in the selection of Nelson as the terminus of the railway, and that the Government should not make further important expenditures upon this port without first making a new and thorough examination into the relative merits of Churchill and Nelson as a terminus for the railroad.

This report quite naturally received wide publicity in the West but in the light of the post-war recession and the urgent need for the construction of branch lines to serve settled areas of the prairies, Western spokesmen generally conceded that the completion of the Hudson Bay Railway, while of prime importance, might have to wait its turn. Public expenditure meanwhile was under harsh scrutiny. The problem of what to do with the country's insolvent railroads made the government reluctant to renew construction.

In November, 1922, an Order-in-Council was passed approving the removal of badly-needed steel rails from the Hudson Bay Railway beyond mile 214 for use in construction by the Canadian National Railways. The Bay railway was not in use past mile 214 but this action aroused considerable protest on the prairies. It was one thing to concede that the Hudson Bay Railway might have to wait for completion; it was quite another thing to have it bodily torn up. The Order-in-Council was suspended as a result of representations made to Sir Henry Thornton during his trip to the West. The incident, however, seems to have been the signal for renewed demands that the road be completed.

Organized agitation began in earnest with the formation of the "On-to-the-Bay" Association in 1923. That same year a petition said to be signed by 175,000 electors was presented to the Federal Government. It respectfully begged that the railway be completed to the Bay. There was a rising tide of support for

the project as better prices and more prosperous times stabilized the nation's economy. In 1925 a motion by a Western member that recognition be made of the priority of the Hudson Bay Railway with respect to other transportation projects was carried in the House, after a spirited debate. A telling argument used was that public land to the value of \$25,000,000 had been sold by 1925 for the purpose of providing funds for the Hudson Bay Railway while only \$20,000,000 had been spent. In consequence of aroused public support the governments decided to complete the Bay road.

In which the
building of the
Hudson Bay
Railway is
recommended.

Having decided to complete the line, the Department gave consideration to the Committee's recommendation of 1920 that further study be given port facilities at Churchill and Nelson. It engaged the services of Sir Frederick Palmer, an eminent authority on port construction and an unbiased consultant. In August, 1927, Mr. Palmer, with a party of officials and technicians, visited Port Nelson and Port Churchill. After a thorough assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of each site, Mr. Palmer submitted a full report in October, 1927. While much of the report was of a technical nature outlining physical conditions, engineering problems, etc., the conclusions reached were implicit. They were:

1. That Churchill is undoubtedly the Port to be selected as affording a real harbour in which shipping facilities can be provided in calm water protected from all storms by the surrounding rocky cliffs.
2. The estimated costs of corresponding accommodation at Nelson and Churchill disclose marked advantages in favour of the latter, the figures showing that, including interest during the period of construction, the cost at Churchill will be less than one-third of what is required to complete Nelson. Even after adding the cost of the extra 87 miles of railway to Churchill, the cost at this place will be only about one-half of the Nelson port estimate.
3. The time for completion of the works at Churchill, viz., 8 years, is one-half of the time needed to carry out the Nelson works.
4. That Churchill provides a completely sheltered port for shipping from the moment the entrance is passed, while at Nelson no shelter can be confidently reckoned

upon until the wharf is reached, and then only by the provision of breakwaters.

5. That the annual charges, including interest, operation and maintenance would be about a million dollars greater at Nelson than at Churchill.
6. That at both Nelson and Churchill the sites admit of considerable extensions, but at much less cost at Churchill than at Nelson. . .
7. The evidence regarding ice conditions at both ports is vague and inconclusive and no satisfactory or reliable decision can be given in regard thereto. . .

Following upon these conclusions, it is strongly recommended that Churchill be made the port terminal for the Hudson Bay Railway because it affords by far the best possible opportunity for the development of trade through the Bay.

In view of Mr. Palmer's strong recommendation that Churchill be the terminal port it may be asked why Nelson was ever considered. The answer is simple. By 1927 techniques had improved and knowledge of conditions in the north was much greater. Test drillings carried out during the winter of 1926-1927 with a well drill flown in showed that the harbour was free of rock and could readily be dredged. This made feasible the widening of the channel and the construction of a deep water wharf. By 1927 it had been found that a substantial gravel fill on top of muskeg acted as a heat insulator and prevented the softening of the roadbed under the summer sun. This obstacle had bulked large in 1909. The disability of a lower mean annual temperature at Churchill still remained.

and Churchill
becomes the
terminus.

The government accepted Mr. Palmer's recommendations and work was immediately begun on the transferring of plant and supplies from Nelson to Churchill. This was done with such

despatch that a camp was ready and a wharf prepared to receive incoming cargoes in 1928. The Department of Railways and Canals took action to prevent speculation in lots at the Churchill site. In 1909 Wm. Beech had been granted a homestead in Churchill townsite including an area of 176 acres. C. E. Beech had acquired 125 acres in the townsite. Expropriation proceedings were instituted against them and C. E. Beech and the Courts decided on a just price for compensation.

Inland, work on the road had been resumed in 1926. During the eight-year interval 1918 to 1926 much of the line had deteriorated. The ties had rotted, embankments had settled and frost damage had been extensive. The Department of Railways and Canals authorized the Canadian National Railway to act as its agent in the work of reconstruction. The Canadian National Railway was also authorized to complete the line to Churchill. The C.N.R. engineers rebuilt much of the old roadbed, reducing gradients and curves and replacing ties. In relocating the railway between mile 332 and Churchill the most economical route was found to be along the old roadbed to mile 356 and thence north to the port. By October, 1928 the steel had been laid to mile 428 and finally on April 3rd, 1929 the railroad was completed. The last sixty miles, however, had been laid on frozen ground and swamp without ballast. This permitted the passage of supplies to the Churchill end so that ballasting could be carried on from both ends. This operation was completed by September 14th and 510 miles of steel road linked The Pas and Hudson Bay. On September 19th a souvenir shipment of 1,800 pounds of wheat was despatched from Churchill on the S.S. Ungava for England. The historic route, in modern garb was again open.

*In which Churchill
becomes Canada's
third great ocean port.*

From the time of the intrepid Jens Munk onward those who sought haven and trade at the mouth of the Churchill river chose the West side of the harbour. There the Hudson's Bay Company built its first and second posts. There Fort Prince of Wales was built. There, in 1906, the North West Mounted Police set up a post. But it was the East peninsula that was chosen as the site for a terminus. Better shelter, more room for expansion, one bridge less, — these were the factors which decided the choice.

Work on the port began in earnest in 1928. A temporary wharf was erected that year to receive ships loaded with timber, coal and other supplies. The chief concern during 1928 and 1929 was the putting up of buildings and the installation of machinery and dredging equipment. During 1929 the preliminary dredging was completed and shallow cribs were put up and filled, in the rear wall of the wharf. A wireless station was set up in 1928 to expedite communication with Ottawa. In 1929 this station assumed the duties of direction finding for the benefit of ships approaching or leaving the port. By the end of 1929 all was in readiness to proceed with the main port installations.

Churchill harbour is a natural haven giving good protection from storms and rough seas from whatever quarter the wind

may blow. Such a harbour did not need improving. Anchorage is available inside up to thirty-five feet in depth at low tide. To make such a haven into a port required certain man-made adaptations. It was necessary to build a permanent wharf and to dig an approach channel. Engineers found by comprehensive boring that the channel and wharf could be located on the east side with no expensive dredging in rock.

The cribs that form the face of the main wharf were built during 1930 and 1931. These were built up to the seventeenth course in shallow water and then moved to deep water and built up to the thirty-sixth course. Douglas fir was used in this construction. Each crib was then towed into position over the crib seat and sunk by heavy concrete blocks. The blocks were removed after a dredge had partially filled each crib to hold it down. It is interesting to reflect that the famous "Mulberry" floating docks used to such advantage by the Allies as supply depots off Normandy were built in Britain, floated across the channel, and sunk in position with concrete blocks. At Churchill the cribs were built up to an overall height of 55 feet and the whole of the lower was buttressed with a retaining wall of gravel.

The completed deep water wharf as thus built measured 1,856 feet at the face with a width of 300 feet for the greater part. A timber trestle was built near the upper end of the wharf to accommodate a crane used in unloading coal from ships. A standard gauge railway track was then built from the trestle, along the front of the wharf, to the lower end. The wharf afforded nineteen mooring posts.

A freight shed was erected in 1932 and enlarged in 1935 to dimensions of 477 feet by 173 feet. This building was of structural steel with timber floor and tar and gravel roof. The railway ran inside the shed, at the back, the full length of the building. A roadway at the rear of the shed allowed access and egress for trucks and tractors. Twenty cattle pens were located on an extension of the coal track. The total capacity is about twenty carloads at one time. Watering and feeding facilities were provided and provision made for inspection by an official.

While the port facilities were being constructed dredges were at work digging the ship channel. Part of the material excavated was used for crib filling but the greater part was dumped into the Bay. By 1936 the channel was completed. It was 600 feet wide in front of the wharf and 400 feet wide at the lower end of the harbour mouth. The overall depth of the channel as dredged was thirty feet below the level of low tide. Since a certain amount of silting occurs it was necessary to provide

storage facilities for a dredging plant. In 1932 a marine slipway of the three-track type was installed.

Expectations were that grain shipments over the Hudson Bay Railway would be the major traffic. It was necessary then to build an elevator at Port Churchill. This elevator is the distinctive landmark of the port. The latest ideas in construction and equipment went into the design. The main group of buildings includes an office, track shed, workhouse, drying and cleaning plants and storage annex. A separate building contains the power plant. The elevator buildings front on the wharf. The foundations are supported on piles and the buildings are of reinforced concrete construction. As completed in 1931 the storage capacity of the workhouse was 500,000 bushels and that of the annex was 2,000,000 bushels. The workhouse can handle 8,000,000 bushels per shipping season and the addition of another leg would double this. Plans for the elevator as originally drawn make provision for this and further expansion. The grain drier has a capacity of 1,000 bushels per hour.

The loading and unloading facilities for grain are certainly first rate. The booklet *Churchill and the Hudson Bay Route* reports on them thus:

Loaded grain cars are emptied, after arrival at the elevator, by four car unloaders in the track shed, each capable of emptying eight cars, about 10,000 bushels, per hour, under conditions of maximum performance. After the grain has been elevated it can be delivered to the deep-water wharf by a four-belt conveyer system which runs in a gallery. The shipping gallery in its 1,462 feet of length, provides berths at the wharf for three ships at one time under the gallery spouts. Twenty-three boat spouts about sixty-five feet apart make it possible to discharge four streams into ships at the rate of 20,000 bushels an hour for each stream.

The water supply for the port comes from a reservoir about four miles from the mouth of the harbour. The site selected for the reservoir was a small lake near Lake Rosabella. As completed in 1934 this reservoir has a capacity of some 20,000,000 gallons. A 60,000 gallon tank was installed near the reservoir and another on high land near the bay. This latter known as the town tank, supplies the needs of wharf, power-house, railway and camp, by gravity. A pump house was built at each tank.

Since the ground is frozen all year round at Churchill the water pipes cannot be sunk underground. The mains are supported on timber posts and covered to a depth of four feet with moss. Where the mains cross water they are secured in a cedar

box with provision for heating with steam pipes. By the close of 1934 intake works, mains and pumps were completed and connected up. A system of fire protection was installed on the wharf

When Churchill was selected as the terminal for the Hudson Bay Railway the Department of Railways and Canals took over control of lands lying within and without the Beech subdivision. By Order-in-Council No. 419, dated March 11th, 1929, all that portion of the East peninsula extending from Cape Murry, at the entrance to the harbour, to a line parallel to thirty-seventh avenue and at a distance of one mile to the southeast of it came under the control of the Department. After the completion of the railway and port facilities the area not required was turned over to the Province of Manitoba for the establishment of a town-site. Provision was made for housing a detachment of the R.C.M.P.

The Government of Manitoba laid out a town-site in 1931. The lots surveyed were not for grant or sale though anyone who wishes to occupy a lot may obtain a lease. Building regulations require settlers to erect warm, substantial houses. There are special precautions enforced to reduce the fire hazard. The town-site was graded but no public system of water mains and sewers was provided as the frost problem can only be overcome at a heavy expense.

The Old Route in
moderna garb.

From a technical standpoint the Hudson Bay Railway is an excellent one. The eighty pound steel rails are adequate for the heaviest freight. From a maximum of 1,290 feet near The Pas, the elevation is reduced to ten feet at Churchill terminal with no steep grades. The maximum curvature is seven degrees; indeed there are only four curves which exceed three degrees. All this makes for fast and economical operating schedules.

The roadbed itself is in excellent condition. Maintenance is required to correct subsidences in the muskeg sector but an annual application of gravel is sufficient to prevent rolling. Weather conditions dictate the actual maintenance cost figures. Extremes in temperature are part of the operating conditions of the road while heavy snowfalls of necessity add to operating expenses.

It has been estimated that the capacity of the road with present facilities is 3,200 freight cars, or some five million bushels per month. In October, 1932, the road carried 1,492 cars of grain alone. In 1942 the road realized an operating profit as a result of the freight traffic carried to the United States Army base which

was maintained at Churchill during the war. This in spite of the fact that no wheat was shipped from Churchill due to war conditions.

The port of Churchill provides a secure harbour for ships. The capacity of the port during the shipping season under favourable conditions is estimated at twenty-five million bushels at maximum performance. Facilities for handling a greater quantity could readily be made available. Since 1937 the port has been under the administration and control of the National Harbours Board. Storage rates at the grain elevator are set by the Board of Grain Commissioners for Canada.

The sea route from Churchill is remarkably free from rocks and shoals. The tides in the strait are strong but navigation of the Hudson Bay Route is not intricate. The passage from the entrance to the straits to the mouth of Churchill harbour can be made with only four alterations of course. Fog occurs frequently but is of short duration. Magnetic disturbances in the region make magnetic compasses unreliable.

The chief problem for ships navigating the route is ice. Most of the ice in Hudson Bay is winter ice. Winter ice also forms locally in the bays and in broad belts in the strait. It is the ice floes carried by tidal currents, however, that render the strait impassable at certain times. From the McLean report of the 1927-28 expedition it appears that the ice reaches a maximum roughly between January 16 and February 15. The majority opinion of the many expeditions sent by the Canadian Government to investigate navigation conditions in the Bay and straits places the navigation season for the strait at four months, July to October — perhaps longer, and for the Bay an extra month. The present official season permits ships to enter the straits July 13. Ships may leave Churchill as late as October 10th.

The route is adequately supplied with conventional aids to navigation. Five government-owned radio stations located in the Bay and strait provide bearings to ships requesting the service, by means of direction finding equipment. A large ice-breaker remains in the straits during the navigation season to give assistance when required. A tug, especially reinforced for ice conditions, is stationed at Churchill. Ice reports, weather forecasts, fog signals, beacons and buoys are adequate. It is significant that since the route opened there has been only one casualty among grain carrying ships. The *Bright Fan* struck an iceberg on September 25th, 1932, and sank without loss of life. A formal investigation reported that:

... a good and proper lookout was not maintained on board the *Bright Fan* and this was especially so for some time

before the iceberg was seen, and the Court is of opinion that if such a lookout had been kept the collision would probably not have taken place. . . .

In which a town is
named after a
miner, a surveyor
sees a new northern
railway and the
New North comes
into its own

The old economy of the north was based upon plants and animals. These are still the critical foundations but a new economy based upon physics and chemistry is being erected. Into the vast almost empty areas of the Pre-Cambrian Shield of the prairie provinces and still farther north in the North West Territories man presses ever deeper, digging, assaying, listening. The railway, the aeroplane, the mining company, the Geiger counter — these offspring of modern technology are opening up the wilderness, mastering distance, unifying the remote. This process began thirty years ago in Flin Flon, but yesterday in Lynn Lake, to-day in Uranium City. The frontier of settlement is moving north with this development.

Flin Flon was the pioneer community of this new technology. Its very name smacks of the frontier. A group of prospectors, in the early twenties, searched for minerals in this northern area. While munching lunch, one found a weatherbeaten book under a log. It was a fantastic story concerning one, Joseph Flintabatty Flonatin, of the Society for the Exploration of Unexplored Regions. The fabulous Flintabatty Flonatin sought a new country at the bottom of a lake and explored it in a submarine. He went deep into the bowels of the earth and reached his destination but finding the inhabitants to be Amazons, strong women who ruled their husbands, Flintabatty escaped through the crater of an extinct volcano. Thus the story, and it amused the prospectors so much that when they later struck it rich they named their mine, Flin Flon, after the adventurous hero.

The career of this mining mecca has been remarkable. In 1928 there was no one there. To-day it is a community of 11,000 souls. The payroll tops twenty-five million dollars as the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company is one of the largest producers of zinc and copper on the continent. Within 200 miles there is only one community of as many as 3,000 people. But the finding of zinc and copper and the almost accidental discovery of the application of the flotation principle to the products, led to the construction of a modern copper and zinc refinery and a hydro-electric power installation of 110,000 horse-power.

North-east of Flin Flon is the mining community of Sherridon, noted for the production of base metals and gold. North

again in Lynn Lake which shows promise of very large deposits of nickel and copper. Then there is Snow Lake, Mystery Lake, Ferguson Lake and Rankin Inlet. Away west, 500 miles from the railway at Prince Albert lies Lake Athabasca. Just north of this lake, uranium has been found and thirty or forty companies are at work running addits or using Geiger counters. The Government of Canada is constructing a mill to process the radio-active ore, Saskatchewan is laying out a townsite, Uranium City, for 5,000 people. Save for water transportation to Waterways, Alberta, in the summer the community and mines are wholly dependent on the aeroplane, tractor train and the radio-telephone. Farther to the west, in Alberta, lie the McMurray tar sands with their promise of untold reservoirs of oil. All these are in the so-called prairie provinces.

Farther north, in the territories, the picture is as promising. A special committee of the Canadian Senate, appointed to investigate the natural resources of the Mackenzie Basin, in 1887-1888 reported:

Gold has been said to exist in certain portions of the barren grounds. Silver on the Upper Liard and Peace Rivers, copper upon the Coppermine River, which may be connected with an eastern arm of Great Bear Lake by a tramway of forty miles, iron, graphite, ochre, brick and pottery clays, mica, gypsum, lime, and in the Mackenzie District the petroleum area is so extensive as to justify the belief that eventually it will supply the larger part of this continent and be shipped from Churchill or some more Northern Hudson Bay Port to England.

Oil at Norman Wells, gold at Yellow Knife, radium at Eldorado — these are heady topics of conversation. Finally there is the pitch-blende, the most abundant ore of uranium found in Pre-Cambrian rocks of Western Canada. As further discoveries are made, as markets expand, and as northern transportation problems are solved, mining may extend to the remotest corners of our north. With this activity will come new communities, modern, well housed, powered by the rivers, using local supplies of timber, gas, oil, sodium sulphate, producing base metals, pulp, and other products demanded by our civilization.

The key to this northern development is transportation — railways, airways, cat-trains. One of the hinges on which any such transportation network will hang is Churchill. Wm. T. Thompson, in his day a Dominion Lands Surveyor *par excellence*, and dean of Western Canadian land surveyors, had this to say on the subject as reported in the Regina Daily Star May 13, 1936:

Looking towards the construction of a railway line from the end of steel at Big River to Lake Athabasca, with an extension to Churchill and a branch line into Lac la Ronge, plans of a route have been drawn up by Wm. T. Thompson . . . of Cranberry Portage, Manitoba. . . .

The proposed route is from Big River, via Lac la Ronge, Ile a la Crosse, Frobisher Lake to Stony Rapids, at the head of navigation near the east end of Lake Athabasca, a distance of 400 miles, with an additional 450 miles for the extension from Stony Rapids to Churchill.

This would give Prince Albert direct rail connection with Stony Rapids and Churchill on the Hudson's Bay and would ensure Prince Albert's title to the gateway to the rich mineral northlands. . . .

The western end of such a system has not lacked supporters. Mr Page Rideout of Nelson, B.C., is a long time advocate of a rail line linking Prince Rupert on the Pacific with Churchill on the Bay to serve the growing needs of the mineral rich north. Yesterday these were dreams, today they are plans, to-morrow . .

In which we reach
the conclusion.

The story of the Hudson Bay route is a story of high adventure. It is by no means a completed chapter in our country's progress. In the fur trading years the route emerged to a position of dominance despite the manifold difficulties. The route declined as the new technology re-orientated economic patterns. This same technology is to-day swinging the balance to the north and this shift is bringing the Bay route into prominence. The Hudson Bay Railway is the start line for an economic attack on the Canadian Northwest.

Canada to-day is a nation bursting at the seams. The transportation is stretched to the limit to meet demands. Churchill in this sense is not a competitor of Montreal or Vancouver. It is a third and necessary outlet for a country which is fast outgrowing its transportation facilities. More true today than ever before is Sir Wilfrid's statement of forty years ago that there is trade enough for all. He deprecated fears that the Bay route would rob the St. Lawrence route. To-day, the one supplements the other. The Bay route is necessary; it is feasible, it is strategically and economically vital.

The Hudson Bay railway makes easy the long trip from the prairies, through the parkland, through the Shield, into the north, and on to Hudson Bay. Fur traders and Indians toiled this

route in days gone by. Tourists in increasing numbers now travel in comfort seeking a glimpse of the true north. Old Fort Churchill of many historic associations has become new Port Churchill — key to the North. Troops and equipment move up the railway to this strategic northern military centre.

The New Route — the Hudson Bay Route — has a part to play in the story of our land just as romantic and just as important as that played by the Old Route. It forms, and will continue to form, an essential link in one of the great routes of our world trade, both import and export; it recalls many picturesque episodes in our early history, and its associations give it an enduring appeal to tourists from far and near, and even more important may be the vital role it will assume in the event of a threat to the freedom of Canada.



Part III — Appendices . . .

THE APPENDICES WERE SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THIS BOOKLET
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"ON-TO-THE-BAY"

Take out your Atlas and turn to a map of Canada. Something will attract you that has intrigued people for the last three hundred years. It is that great body of salt water in the heart of our country, Hudson Bay, connected to the Atlantic Ocean by Hudson Strait.

"What a natural waterway to the interior of our continent", you may think. And so have men over the years. For this was the route explorers followed searching for the North West Passage. This was the route used by the Hudson's Bay Company fur traders of Montreal to seek union with the older English company.

But times changed, and with the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, trade began to follow the long east-west haul across Canada. A trickle, later to become a flood of grain started to move by rail to the head of the Lakes, where it was transhipped to Lake boats, eventually to be moved overseas from American or St. Lawrence ports.

However, the old route to the Prairies had not been forgotten. Westerners in the growing city of Winnipeg remembered that the northern route saved one thousand miles and several handlings in getting wheat to England, where an increasing industrial population needed more and more cheap food. Hence, there began representations by the people of the West for the development and use of the Hudson Bay Route. As early as 1878, Henry Hind presented a brief urging the building of a railway to the Bay before a House of Commons Committee. In 1883, the Manitoba and North West Farmers' Union meeting in Winnipeg, passed a resolution asking for the building "of a Hudson's Bay Railway with the least possible delay". An inquiry by the Manitoba Legislature in 1884 reported favorably upon the project. As a result the Dominion government made land grants which enabled steel to reach The Pas, and it collected \$42,257,640 from land sales for the purpose of building a railway to the Bay.

A survey was made in 1908 and 1909 out of The Pas in the direction of Nelson and Churchill. In 1910 the contract was let for the construction of the bridge across the Saskatchewan at The

Pas, and work was continued in the direction of Nelson, with the bridge across the Kettle Rapids being completed in 1917. But in that year all construction ceased and the line gradually deteriorated.

But the West had not forgotten the line to the Bay. A Senate committee in 1920 advised completion of the railway, but suggested that further studies be made as to the relative merits of Nelson and Churchill. No action was taken, but it was when word went around that orders had been given to pull up the rails that a disappointed and impatient West became really alarmed. As a result, the efforts of Boards of Trades, Municipalities, and farm and business groups were consolidated when the "On-To-The-Bay Association" was organized in 1924 at Winnipeg by enthusiastic supporters from Manitoba and Saskatchewan points.

The new Association campaigned vigorously for the completion of the railway to the Bay. A series of booklets entitled *The Hudson Bay Route, Western Canada's Short Outlet to the Markets of the World, Progress and Possibilities*, was published, with No. 1 coming out in September 1928. The project was also a live one in the House of Commons. When Hon. C. A. Dunning became Minister of Railways and Canals in 1926, the West was given assurance that the line would be rehabilitated, and completed to Churchill, now decided upon as the logical port. Steel reached Churchill on March 29th, 1929, and the first commercial cargoes of wheat went out on the Farnworth and Warkworth of the R. S. Dalgliesh Shipping Company of Newcastle. It looked as if the battle had been won.

Progress is made because people will work and sacrifice for what they feel is the right. A few of such many workers of the On-To-The-Bay Association were Brig. Gen. R. W. Patterson of Winnipeg the first President; Colonel James, Regina, J. A. Campbell, The Pas, O. D. Hill, M.L.A., Melfort, J. M. Stevenson, Saskatoon; and R. H. MacNeill, The Pas.

The In-Between Years.

Unfortunately, the opening of the Bay Route co-incided with the world-wide depression and the drought and grasshoppers of the "Thirties". So the high hopes originally held for the northern sea lane were not realized, and with the coming of World War Two, the Port was closed down to commercial traffic by the naval authorities. During these years of inactivity, it seemed as if the Bay Route was to be forgotten. A new generation in the West knew little or nothing of the possibilities of the Route or of the struggles to secure its

building and operation. Obviously interests opposed to the new trade route would do nothing to revive it, and if support was not forthcoming from those who believed in it, the chances were that the Port of Churchill might never awake from its war-time sleep.

By the fall of 1944, the Allies were well established in Europe and the end of the War was only a matter of time. If Churchill was to be re-established as a commercial port, now was the time to act. An acknowledgement for being alive to the situation must be made to the United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section. Their officials contacted the available councillors of the On-To-The-Bay Association, and arranged a meeting to follow the Farmers Convention in Saskatoon. Mr. Frank Appleby, the farm organization's president, invited the farm delegates to attend the Bay meeting and sixty-five did so. The result was that on November 15th, 1944, the old Association was reorganized under the name of the Hudson Bay Route Association with Mr. Walter G. Streeton, a prominent farmer of Plunkett, Sask., as President, and the U.F.C. secretary, Mr. Frank Elason, also acting as secretary-treasurer of the H.B.R.A.

The Hudson Bay Route Association thus formed was a non-political organization, supported by yearly membership fees, from municipalities, Boards of Trade, businessmen, farm groups and individual memberships. In the early years, as to-day the support received from the municipalities did much to allow the work of the new Association to be carried out.

Soon came V.E. Day, and with the demand for food widespread, the H.B.R.A. felt that the facilities at Churchill should be pressed into immediate use. But it was not until after many representations that the new body succeeded in having the Canadian Government declare the Port open, too late for its use in 1945.

In August 1946, the Secretary accompanied by Mr. A. J. Hansen, a Director, spent a week at Churchill to get first hand information as to conditions at the Port and town. They found that the railway was still "under construction". As this prevented protests against the freight rates, the Association set to work to have this handicap removed. Mr. Peter Dalglish, following the pattern set by his father R. S. Dalglish, again pioneered the working up of Westbound cargo, as conditions in this respect were back to where they were in 1931.

Meanwhile the H.B.R.A. was trying to get the governments of the three Prairie Provinces to work together to develop the Bay Route. Their efforts met with some success, for although Western Management of the Port was not achieved, a continuing

Technical Committee was established and for several years made a study of problems relating to the Route.

1947 was a year of progress as the number of ships using Churchill increased, and the first of the popular Saskatchewan Government Excursions to the Bay, under the direction of W. J. Hansen, Trade Services Director, was successfully operated.

Mr. Dalghesh was now making his annual trips to the West in his efforts to develop import traffic, and in 1949 was host to four boys from Saskatchewan. Every year since then Saskatchewan boys have enjoyed a tour of the United Kingdom and have returned via the Bay, as his guests. And in 1949 the H.B.R.A. conducted a school essay contest, a project which has since been carried on by the Saskatchewan government in conjunction with British Trade Week. The first of the Association's field men were now covering Saskatchewan and part of Manitoba, giving talks and enrolling members. As a result when a H.B.R.A. delegation visited the Prime Minister and Cabinet at Ottawa they were able to present as evidence of Western support of their brief, nearly 8,000 actual signatures of paid-up members.

On April 9th, 1953, the Association, through its hard working freight rate expert, Director R. H. MacNeill of Kiasiasing, Manitoba, presented a brief before the Board of Transport Commissioners at Regina. The brief asked for equal treatment for Churchill with other Canadian ports. Given this it was suggested that the northern sea-route would help to hold Western Canada's overseas markets, would develop the new North and would become a third transcontinental route across Canada.

This is the brief story of how the development of a Canadian heritage has been secured. Only a few names of the many who have given of their time and talents without thought of monetary reward can be mentioned. But the story is just beginning, for a new empire in the North is opening up before our eyes to-day. The Bay Route has a vital part to play in this. We look to you, the citizens of to-morrow, to understand and accept the exciting challenge of Churchill, the Bay Route and the New North, and to carry on the work begun by those who have preceded you.

From the Golden Prairies to the Blue Atlantic

Once again turn to your map of Canada, and let us trace a carload of wheat as it moves overseas via the Hudson Bay Route.

A farmer near Saskatoon, delivers his grain to the local elevator and soon it is loaded into a box car, destination "Churchill". From the prairie, through the parklands via Melfort or Canora it travels, on to Hudson Bay and The Pas. Now begins the 510 mile run over the Hudson Bay line of the C.N.R. By lakes and through forests the train moves smoothly, past Wekusko, jumping off point for Snow Lake, a pause at Wabowden, then on again. Mile 241 is reached and the train passes over the first crossing of the Nelson River at the Manitou Rapids, then on to the divisional point of Gillam. Engines are changed and the train starts on its final run of 184 miles.

Seven miles out, the turbulent Kettle Rapids are crossed by a fine steel bridge, then on again across the Limestone and Owl Rivers, and north to Churchill. Herchmer is reached and the country takes on the atmosphere of the far north, for the train is now passing through the land of "the little sticks" dwarf spruce whose branches are on the south side only. At mile 440 the "Barrens" are reached, a land of moss, stunted willows, arctic poppies, sloughs, shallow lakes, and in season the caribou. Thirty-five miles further on trees again appear, soon the wide Churchill River is seen on the left, the joint Canadian-American military base is on the right, the elevator looms into view and the prairie sea-port of Churchill marks the end of the journey.

Here, 814 miles from Saskatoon, over one hundred miles less than the distance to Ft. Wilham, the farmer's grain has reached tidewater. It has travelled over a smooth roadbed which has easy grades and curves and which was built to handle much more traffic than it has yet been called upon to do.

Now the car is shunted to the unloading shed of the elevator, seized by clamps, rocked and in five minutes the grain is in the pit. From there it moves across to the scales and cleaners of the workhouse. On it goes carried by fast moving belts six hundred feet out to the grain gallery above the dock, down the spouts and into the hold of the waiting Dalghesh ship the "Warkworth". In less than twelve hours the vessel is down in the water to her Plimsoll Line, so the hatches are battened down and she is ready for the open sea. Now the pilot comes aboard, the Churchill tug "Grahame Bell" fastens a cable to her stern, lines holding her to the dock are cast from the bollards of the wharf, and the ship

is turned so that her bow points downstream. The propellor starts to turn, slowly she gathers steerage way, the power house whistle blows a goodbye, the voyage has commenced. Gathering speed she clears the narrow harbour entrance, then only one mile from the dock the pilot shakes hands with the captain, and jumps into the tug which has drawn up alongside the freighter Farewell blasts come from both whistles and the "Warkworth" is on her own.

North and East she plows across the open water of the bay, around low-lying Mansell Island, alongside Charles Island, past Cape Hope's Advance, then out through the entrance of Hudson's Straits at Resolution Island to the Atlantic. In four days over 990 miles, nearly one-third of the voyage has been completed through protected waters, thanks to the skill of her officers, the direction finding stations and lights maintained by the Department of Transport along the Route and the advice furnished by the government patrol ship, the N B McLean. The "Warkworth" has once again made the passage claimed by many mariners to be safer than that of the St. Lawrence.

The Tourist Travels North.

Already the Bay line and Port are attracting tourists. The Saskatchewan government and the C.N.B. each operate very popular excursions to Churchill every year. Many visitors leave their cars at The Pas and travel by train or C.P.A. plane to spend several days at the Port, sampling the northern atmosphere, the seaside, watching operations at the elevator, dock or whale factory, visiting the old Hudson Bay fortress of Fort Prince of Wales, Sloop Cove (where Samuel Hearne's name may be seen carved in the rock) the Battery and the army camp. With two modern hotels, restaurants, picture theatre, stores, and taxis, the tourist is well provided for.

DISTANCE TABLE

From:	To Liverpool
Churchill	2,936
Montreal—	
Via Belle Isle Strait	2,760
Via Cabot Strait	3,007
Halifax	2,490
Saint John, N.B.	2,756
Vancouver	8,647
New York	3,040

Distances From Principal Western Canadian Points to Liverpool From.

	Via Montreal (Great Lakes Route)	Via Churchill
Regina	4,750	3,770
Saskatoon	4,878	3,750
Prince Albert	4,911	3,696
Moose Jaw	4,792	3,821
Winnipeg	4,393	3,918
Portage la Prairie	4,449	3,859
Brandon	4,527	3,873
Calgary	5,226	4,150
Edmonton	5,224	4,073

The advantage gained by the shorter haul will be seen from the following figures, showing the distances from principal western Canadian points to Churchill as compared with Montreal:

From:	Churchill all rail	Montreal rail	Montreal Great Lakes
Regina	848 miles	1,173 miles	1,990 miles
Saskatoon	814	1,828	2,105
Prince Albert	760	1,871	2,148
Moose Jaw	885	1,766	2,032
Winnipeg	977	1,357	1,688
Portage la Prairie	923	1,412	1,689
Brandon	937	1,492	1,767
Calgary	1,214	2,220	2,497
Edmonton	1,137	2,147	2,424

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS THROUGH CHURCHILL SINCE RE-OPENING AFTER WORLD WAR II

Year	Exports	Imports
1946	3,000,000 bushels wheat 1,000,000 ft. lumber 2,000 tons flour	40 tons
1947	5,000,000 bushels wheat 5,000,000 ft. lumber	450 tons
1948	5,314,342 bushels wheat	1,200 tons
1949	5,550,000 bushels wheat Insurance reduced 25%	2,500 tons
1950	5,700,500 bushels wheat Season lengthened by ten days. Insurance rates reduced by 33%	
1951	7,278,443 bushels wheat Season opened July 23rd	7,500 tons
1952	8,500,000 bushels wheat	13,000 tons
1953	10,784,445 bushels wheat	?

"NORTHWARD HO!"

"All aboard" is the cry heard in Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg each summer as the Churchill Specials prepare to pull out for Churchill and Hudson Bay. Since the early thirties the C.N.R. has run an annual excursion special from Winnipeg to the mining centres of northern Manitoba and to the Port of Churchill. It carries many American sight-seers. Since 1947 the Saskatchewan Government has sponsored an excursion to the Bay in an attempt to familiarize Saskatchewan citizens with the potentialities of the North and of the northern route. In 1953, some 250 people from 90 centres in Saskatchewan made this trip. Fifty percent were farmers, the remainder represented thirty other occupations.

Let us take the trip with the happy passengers who enjoyed the seventh annual Saskatchewan Churchill Excursion in 1953. "This way for the Churchill Special," calls the policeman at the station in Regina. We cross the tracks to a train of six sleepers. Here courteous porters show us to our berths. We pick up four more sleepers and two dining cars at Saskatoon next morning. We are on our way in a moving hotel complete with books, movies, good meals, and good company.

A warm welcome awaits us at Hudson Bay — The Junction, as it is still known, as a lady conductor directs the smart town band. We scamper over the tracks to see the Hamjae Plywood Factory where poplar logs are made into plywood. Off again and this time to The Pass, a town located at the apex of a new farming area stretching back to Carrot River. Here a grain elevator shoulders its height into the northern sky just 500 miles from the ocean boats at Churchill.

Our moving hotel then commences the 500 mile run to the sea. Past Clearwater Lake, past Cormorant we go, whilst another fine meal is enjoyed. The last film is then shown and reluctantly we climb into our berth. The new day brings us the divisional point of Gillam where some visit the little Anglican church, scene of the self-sacrificing labours of the Reverend and Mrs. Hughes-Galey. Off again, with a pause at the famous Kettle Rapids. Here cameras come into play to record this inspiring scene where the Saskatchewan, Red River and Lake Winnipeg waters rush on their way to the Bay.

Over the tundra the train glides smoothly, past isolated section houses until signs of man become more numerous. Excitement mounts as we pass mosquito control stations of the Army and Research branches, the blue waters of the wide estuary of the Churchill shine on our left, someone glimpses the Elevator,

on our right looms the Canadian-American base of Fort Churchill, cars and trucks are again seen on the roads. We have arrived, to be greeted warmly, officially and unofficially, by the people of Churchill.

There is much to do and see in Churchill. In turn we view the Army and Air base, the harbour installations, the elevator, the town itself and the Eskimo Museum in the rectory of the Catholic Mission. Now it is time to attend the Old Time Jamboree. Everyone attends — the Churchill residents as guests of the tourists. We dance to the music of a five-piece military orchestra from the Camp.

Morning dawns, foretelling a bright sunny day. Down we go for a tour of the "Warkworth" of the R. S. Dalgleish Lines whose ships have pioneered the working up of Westbound cargoes via The Bay. On board we find that Captain Thomson has guides ready and willing to show us around the ship. Other ships which excite our interest are the "Chionina" which is now loading grain after delivering Fordson Tractors and Consul cars, The C.G.S. "C. D. Howe" and the H. B. Co. supply ship "Rupert Island" and the harbour tug "Grahame Bell".

Over the dock and along the track the tourists hurry to a beach and small dock where a whale boat will take us over to Fort Prince of Wales. We set off, guided by a smiling Eskimo boy, with the tiller between his legs, and make the mile to the landing at the harbour entrance below the fort. A sense of history enfolds us as we gaze at the ruins of Fort Prince of Wales, a unique relic of the final struggles of the French and British for the fur trade of the West. Then something of unusual interest intrigues us, for below the Fort is an encampment of fifty Eskimos. It appears that they are being transferred by the Canadian government on the "C. D. Howe" from northern Quebec to Ellesmere Island where game is more plentiful. We investigate their kayaks made of willow and skins, take pictures of smiling groups, hand out coins into eager hands of smiling brown-faced youngsters, then away again on the return trip.

Meanwhile the planes of Arctic Wings have been busy taking many of our party up to view the scene from above. Other visitors have visited the plant of the Adanac Whaling Company.

But the time for departure draws near and we reluctantly say good-bye to our newly made friends at the northern port. On the train the good time continues as we recount our adventures and display our souvenirs. Inevitably the time to leave the train draws near, and as excursionists dismount the feelings of all are summed up in the remark heard from all sides, "This was the happiest and most interesting trip I have ever made."

Date Due

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Pratt, A. M.,
The Hudson's Bay Route.

DATE	ISSUED TO
FEB 18 '78	<i>Hanson Bengt</i> MAR 3 '78
MAY 7 '77	RENEWED
OCT 19	<i>S. Grant</i> NOV 2 '78
NOV 20	<i>S. Babry</i> DEC 4 '78
MAR 2	<i>A. Hanson</i> MAR 19 '79
	<i>KIM ORICHOWSKI</i> MAR 3 '81
	<i>Patsy Lorne</i> MAR 17 '81



The New Route as seen through a part of the Old.
A freighter approaching Churchill, Man., is viewed
through the wall of the historic Fort Prince of Wales.

—National Film Board



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